



THE DEAR MONSTER

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*by*

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## CHAPTER I

Das weimarische Theater ist . . . keineswegs zu verachten . . . wir können immer noch etwas producieren, das reizt und gefällt und wenigstens den Schein eines Ganzen bietet.

GOETHE—*Gespräche mit Eckermann*

BESIDE and above me there are squares in different colours. I like them and I struggle to get nearer. It is a difficult task, but at last I succeed. Now my eyes are very close to one of the squares and I make a discovery. Seen from afar the colour was violet, now it has dissolved into a multitude of tiny dots: red ones and blue ones. I move back again and the square becomes violet. Now I make a game out of it. A rose square becomes white and red, a light-blue one becomes white and blue. Some squares do not change their colour.

I was about fourteen years old when I suddenly remembered these squares and it was a very clear and lively memory. Even now I can easily recall the joy, curiosity and astonishment of that experience. But it stands isolated and is not linked up with any other. One day I happened to mention it to my mother and she, incidentally, was able to check and time the event exactly. I had been not quite one year old when a young cousin of ours, Liddy D., had been staying with my parents. The girl was sometimes left in charge of the baby and used to cover the upper part of the cradle with a plaid belonging to her. As my mother had objected to the heavy piece of cloth she used, she remembered it perfectly and recognized the squares which were formed by equal numbers of red, white and blue threads crossing each other. I think the happening is quite well proved and it is very interesting indeed as regards child psychology.

Of course there are psychologists, like E. Cassirer, who hold that sense-data are not really experienced before the ability to express them in words and concepts develops. But nowadays the majority tend to the opinion that sense-data are fundamentally independent from language. Possibly my experience has some value for their standpoint.

Personally I have hardly any doubt that I started investigation at that early age.

The event must have taken place in the very last days of the nineteenth century, and I think it is a pity that I cannot remember anything at all of the merry night of the big change. But I do not see any reason why I should not have investigated these squares. I always have been curious and I still am.

My birth seems to have been very typical of a certain main component of my life. Everything was prepared for months and weeks. There was a certain cradle, nicely carved and very old, in the possession of the family chief in which the first-born sons of all the branches of the family were supposed to be laid at their birth. So the venerable piece of furniture was sent for. Old, handwoven linen had been washed a hundred times to serve as swaddling clothes. I don't know whether the cheap and hygienic articles which one can buy nowadays were for sale then. Anyway they would not have been regarded as the right thing for so traditional a household as my parents', where everything had to be home-made.

Since military punctuality was another feature of the household everybody took it for granted when my mother said so, that the event would take place on Sunday, February 4th, 1900. To go to a nursing home was, of course, out of the question as undignified and modern. A lady had to give birth in her home, even if the home, as in our case, was not an ancestral one but a flat into which my parents had moved temporarily when his military duty called my

father to the small Grand-Ducal Residence of Weimar. So midwife and doctor, the latter a *Wirklicher Geheimer Medicinalrat*, were summoned on a Sunday, much to their displeasure.

Nothing happened, and they went home at night convinced that the alarm had been sounded much, possibly a few days, too soon. So when on Monday morning at 7.45 I made my entrance into this world, everybody was taken by surprise. The state cradle had mysteriously vanished. The soft swaddling clothes were nowhere to be found in the general excitement. The doctor was not at home. So, without any of the customary procedure, I was born, swaddled in some stiffly starched napkins which were handy, and put into a laundry basket. As I said before, it was a just and fitting symbol of many events to follow. I think I found the basket very comfortable.

My father's career had been somewhat unusual. He had joined the army as a cadet-officer in 1871 and had been present at the siege of Paris. Probably he had an experience similar to ours in 1919 after the war, and did not leave the army because he happened to be in it and did not see any reason why he should start in a fresh career after 'having been something' already in one. He stayed with the same regiment of hussars he had joined during the war, and was soon appointed aide-de-camp to the Hereditary Grand-Duke of Saxe. The Prince died, I believe, before I was born, but my father liked to talk about him. I think the two men perfectly matched. Neither was cut out for a soldier and had to put up with a uniform somehow. They were somewhat scholarly inclined and the Prince especially showed the typical absent-mindedness of a man always deeply in thought about something remote from the routine business in hand. The Prince was a very intelligent man, but this absent-mindedness made him the laughing-stock of Germany and he became the model for a well-known figure in the funny papers. Once while talking to my father in the court-



yard of the Wartburg, he angrily called up to the window from which the Grand-Duchess asked him to join her: 'But I can't be in two places at the same time. I'm not a bird!' Everybody in Germany is wont to quote this as a joke, but very few know its origin.

When my father found that a military career was not exactly what he was meant for, it was almost too late. He was forty, a captain in his old regiment and a married man. The decision to resign must have been rather a difficult one to make. He was not very rich and there were not many careers open to retired army officers of his age. Just when he thought it inevitable he should retire, he had married and taken on more responsibilities.

My mother was then nineteen years old, she came from a country estate and this was her first season in town. I can see it: the small town of Cassel, proudly calling itself a Royal Prussian Residenz, showing off its old buildings, relics of Napoleonic times, and the gaudy uniforms of its big garrison, and, freshly imported from the Hessian backwoods, the young debutante, small and dark in the long and stiff robes of the Three-Kaiser-Year of 1888, probably not quite up to the fashion. She was of Dutch and Scottish extraction, not exactly beautiful but very charming. She developed later into a perfect society hostess, but in her first season she was only shy and embarrassed by the glamour of the diminutive Residence. And so she gratefully accepted the chaperonage of the tall and friendly hussar who had seen active service, talked about Paris and combined a fatherly attitude with the appearance of a silver-and-blue toy-soldier.

They married right away, and in Cassel my only sister was born. At about that time a certain general, known as His Majesty's tallest officer, came to inspect the regiment. My father having been temporarily a member of the General Staff, in which capacity he had been on the military mission to Turkey, was given a task beyond his rank at the

manœuvres. A well-meaning staff officer told him exactly what solution the general was known to expect, but it happened to be different from what my father intended to do under the given conditions. He was very slow in deciding, but once he had made up his mind, he was usually right, and knew it. The consequences in this particular case are probably talked of in the army to the present day.

After manœuvres the officers rallied as usual to justify their dispositions and to hear the criticism of their lord and master. The umpires gave their opinion about what would have happened in case of actual fact. From their evidence it was clear that my father's dispositions had proved very successful indeed, and there was some grinning behind the general's back. Then His Excellency spoke and explained that everything had been wrong and the only thing to do would have been what was known as his 'patent-solution' of the problem in hand. During the sermon the only thing to do was to stand at attention and to say nothing at all. But when, in an especially graceful mood, the general asked my father: 'Don't you think, Captain, my solution is better, or in fact the only one possible?', he got the dry answer: 'I would have taken these measures of yours myself about fifty years ago, Your Excellency.' When my father told me the story, he said: 'Why the devil did he not have enough sense of humour to say: "Fifty years ago you would have been too young to take any measures at all"?' Why, to expect sense of humour in a Prussian general! What actually happened was, that His Majesty's tallest officer nearly had a fit, and relieved himself by throwing his crested helmet to the ground, whereupon he turned his mount and left the battle-field. My father duly asked to be allowed to resign, but they did not want to let him go, as his slow and methodical ways were esteemed in high places. When he insisted on resigning, he was only put 'at disposition' and later was appointed 'district commander' at Weimar where it was his duty to control conscription and mobilization schemes.

Meanwhile he went to Marburg University to study political economy, an unheard-of thing for an officer to do and a man of forty at that. From there he went to a very small Hessian town, almost a village, on a rather peculiar appointment. There lived there a Dowager Princess, a member of the many cadet-branches of the numerous reigning or former reigning houses in Germany. The lady was in need of a tutor for her two sons and by reason of her rank was pledged to run a kind of court, without having the means to afford court officers. So my father was appointed 'cavalier', meaning that in him were combined all possible court offices. It must have been a very quiet and idyllic life which enabled him to complete his studies. Only years later, when he was district commander in Weimar, was his final resignation from the army granted, and he changed over to become a chamberlain of the Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach.

The incident with His Majesty's tallest officer must have been quite a good preparation for the new office. Of His Royal Highness the Grand-Duke even the most loyal subjects used to say:

Better not see the Duke at all  
As long as he doesn't urgently call.

They knew why. It stands to reason that you cannot check all the gossip about hushed-up cases like this one. The Father of the People, in mufti, passes a village on horse-back. A small farmer's boy calls after him: 'Your horse stinks!' Certainly not very pleasant manners on the boy's part, but not very princely manners either on that of the Duke who dismounts and gives him a sound thrashing with his riding whip.

Sometimes these educational activities seem to have been rather an expensive sport. A sailor on leave takes a walk in the countryside. Passing a wood, he runs into a man wearing the green-grey uniform of the state foresters who shouts at him: 'Don't you know you're trespassing?' The

sailor says he does not and is shouted at: 'Why don't you stand at attention?' Now the sailor is annoyed and asks back, why on earth he should stand to attention before a blooming forester? Without being enlightened as to this justified question, he receives a tremendous thrashing with the butt-end. So the sailor sues an unknown forester for damages. But the Office of Forestry can oblige with alibis for all their men and the case ends without result. Then the sailor, when visiting his solicitor in town, comes across his forester who this time is wearing another uniform and is accompanied by a footman in livery. Well, he got his damages after all without a court case.

Literally true or not — one day I heard my father say when he was just about to don his green dress-coat, liberally embroidered with golden palms, before going to see the Grand-Duke: 'Well, you never know whether he is going to throw an ink-pot or is only going to swear at you.' I was a very small boy then and deeply interested in such naughtiness in grown-ups.

In spite of all this the good people of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach were loyal subjects to the Coronet. And if they could not feel much monarchist reverence for the Duke, they loved the Duchess the more. Both Duchesses, since the Grand-Duke was married twice. I remember the funeral of the first one very well, in fact it was one of the things that made the deepest impression during my early childhood, with the muffled drums of the military, the black horses and the splendour of many uniforms and court-dresses. Even more impressive was the wedding procession when the Grand-Duke married again. A squadron of mounted postilions opened it, sounding the wedding-march on their hunting-horns; blue-and-silver hussars escorted the golden state-coach, and ambassadors and special envoys represented the reigning houses of Europe in so far as the sovereigns themselves failed to attend the ceremony. I don't remember whether the Kaiser was present. But I was very

near to him on another occasion. We schoolboys were lining the street when he passed. I had the good luck to stand at a narrow corner where the coach had to slow down, so I could see him looking in my direction at a few yards' distance. He was glittering all over with colours and flashes of metal, but, amazingly, his very light eyes glancing out from all the splendour flashed still more. I had the same impression even more distinctly when I saw him later in the lobby of the famous Grand-Ducal Theatre, where Goethe had been Director. This theatre played a very important part in Weimar's life. I remember the old, original one of Goethe's day, which later was burned out and was replaced by a modern building. But the old Hoftheater had all the charm, now lost for ever: the modest pomp of red plush and white and golden pillars, the naive allegorical figures on the curtain, and the unforgettable smell of dust, plush, gas, powder and perfumes. And its two stages. Yes, there were two stages, for what else was the big Grand-Ducal box; and was not the acting on that second stage at least as important as the acting opposite it?

I think, as a matter of fact, the whole town was a stage, and we all were actors performing a play, 'Lives of a Residenz'. I wonder whether there was a public at all. Everybody somehow belonged to the performance. There was the Court and Society, and their men in livery and servants; there were the countless shopkeepers and craftsmen 'appointed to the Court of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach'; there were 'our poor', so to speak appointed to every family of the society, the 'actors to the court', the members of the Grand-Ducal Academy of Arts or the Academy of Music. And all these people living in a town of, if I am not mistaken, 27,000 inhabitants. There was the shapeless mass of workmen, somewhere in distant quarters and factories, but if they were seen at all, they too were linked with the performers, because if you could not help meeting them, your first question was inevitably: 'In which regiment have you served?' And, lo,

the workman turned out to be in fact a soldier, and in that capacity, ranged amongst the community of players. He, too, knew his part and acted accordingly. I dare say everybody was conscious of this strange state of affairs, and I only realized that later when I myself was on the stage — the real, theatrical one, I mean. It was the same thing: you know, of course, this is Miss X. in private life, she has a weakness for chop-suey and prefers shoes with low heels. But as long as you are Caesar you believe her to be Cleopatra. In case you have to act the same play a hundred times, you may, by and by, drop the illusion partially and at times and see Miss X. under the royal garment. What was the difference in old Weimar? The tall, handsome, ginger-headed gentleman, covered with gold and carrying an ornamental staff was truly and simply cousin Hugo, but right now he was the Earl-Marshal of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, about to announce the appearance of another fellow-actor, playing His Royal Highness. It was all in the play.

Everybody knew the secret and guarded it with mutual understanding. They all knew each other, too. You were perfectly well informed of everybody's private life. The 'actor to the court' on the theatrical stage, while performing, enjoyed the performance in the boxes and stalls, and you, sitting exactly where rank and duty ordered you to sit, watched attentively not only Ophelia but the pretty Fräulein von H., about whose appointment there were such interesting rumours circulating. One night, when the singing chorus of pilgrims in *Tannhäuser* stepped out of the wings, back from Rome, a young officer waved out of a stage-box and addressed the chorus-leader in a conversational tone: 'Hello, Herr Fettweiss, how did you enjoy Rome?' It was, of course, a sacrilege, as Wagner was highly revered. But nobody could help smirking because everybody knew good old Fettweiss in spite of his endeavours to be a pious pilgrim.

The stage-setting in the town of Weimar was perfect.

There were many houses unaltered since the grand old days of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Lessing, Wieland and all the rest of the illustrious crowd which the Duke had collected to adorn his residence.

The Goethe tradition was still astonishingly alive amongst the Weimarians, and in a curious bourgeois fashion too. The giant had been at home here, sharing the small life of a small town without secrets. You can't be a giant under such circumstances. Certainly, he had been an Excellency, but the people of Weimar knew their Excellencies. You had to worship them and to take off your hat politely, but you also did their washing and were in habitual familiar contact with their private life. So people looked on Goethe in much the same way as the rural inhabitants of a world-famous beauty-spot regard the landscape: if thousands of tourists are ready to pay a lot of money for seeing the sight we are willing to believe anything they tell us. In addition it gives you a certain importance to live in what is generally supposed to be a sanctuary.

Even the rather close traditional connection of our family with Goethe was of a somewhat similar kind. My great-grandfather had been the Prime Minister of the Duchy, when it occurred to the Duke to appoint Goethe Minister of the Interior. He wrote to a friend: 'This nonentity, this advocate from a big city who has not even passed his state-examinations properly, shall never come into my cabinet.' Well, he got there after all and developed quickly from a disorderly Hotspur into a Home-Secretary who suited his Excellency down to the ground. His marginal notes on the documents referring to a young peasant girl who had killed her newborn child show a rather different Goethe. He was strongly opposed to pardon and advocated her execution. Even a less imaginative type than the greatest German poet could have seen from the documents how this poor girl had been driven into her crime by the cruel views of her period on illegitimate mothers. Not that that is an excuse for murder, but perhaps

one would have expected some understanding from the great humanitarian philosopher.

It is sometimes said about a small town, that 'time stands still there'. In Weimar this saying seems to me to have been almost literally true. A hundred years ago the same families had been acting the very same play, and the setting was nearly unchanged. The post office still delivered parcels in the old stage coaches, on the box of which the picturesque postilions who had opened the wedding procession were enthroned. The rococo dress of the Grand-Duke's livery was frequently seen on the streets. It was impossible to believe that nearly a hundred years had passed since Goethe's time, and I would rather believe that a hundred years have passed now since these mid-Wilhelmian days of mine.

The streets were full of soldiers, though the garrison consisted of only one battalion of infantry. But it was not only their blue-and-red tunics which were seen everywhere. There existed a peculiar troop of pompous silver-and-blue hussars, the Palace Guards. They served a purely decorative purpose, such as standing at the entrance of the Hoftheater with enormous swords drawn. They were not a part of the regular army but private servants of the court. You could see army officers of all kinds, visitors, aides-de-camp and military attachés, because there was a surprising number of embassies at the court, from the German *Länder* as well as from foreign countries. If there was a birthday in any Society family, the brass band of the infantry was called out and formed their circle to serenade in the street opposite the house. The traffic in the streets was negligible anyway, and if a coach or a cart came trotting along it just waited and enjoyed the music for a while. People had time in those days. The neighbours came out and promenaded, the children danced, and everybody was happy. At the end the fat conductor shouted commands and his men marched off in perfect order.

The Society life, usually called gay, was possibly more a



duty than a pleasure, and not an easy one at that. It put all the families under a heavy pecuniary strain, and the greater part of it consisted in endless, boring dinners which 'had to be given'. Young people enjoyed themselves at dancing parties and other entertainments, and their parents secretly lamented the expense. After all, these parties had a certain likeness to the armaments race. Everybody had to keep pace with everybody and they would probably all have welcomed a convention to cut down costs generally. But then, Count F. gave a garden party, to which you had to come in genuine rococo costume of course, and were driven the last few hundred yards in the original old state coach to a specially built pavilion where a famous orchestra played Mozart. So what could my parents do but invent something unheard-of so as not to be left behind?

It was my mother's part to see to that, as she had a very highly developed sense of decoration, imagination and a useful gift of putting her fancy schemes into practice. Born some thirty years later she would have made a fine stage designer but now she revelled in directing bazaars for charity or parties in grand style. She was a marvel at conjuring with all kinds of material. So, when a lady noted for this kind of sweet, cattish remark asked her: 'Since Her Royal Highness is to open your bazaar, you certainly will excel us all in elegance. What will it be — a Paris dress?' she answered calmly: 'Oh no, I shall only wear sacking and cheap muslin.' She did, and was the success of the season. To think that she could wear a dress from Paris! That had provoked the quick answer. Decent women had their dresses made at home and anything from Paris must be immoral. I wonder how and why, for the Court regulations demanded that a lady's evening dress be cut so low that nowhere on earth could it expose more.

Two of these parties with more than a hundred guests stand out in my memory. One, which took place in the flat where I had been born, changed it entirely into a

romantic castle. All the walls were papered white and painted by a score of artists to resemble halls and courtyards. The largest room represented the surrounding country, and a small forest of living pines was populated by a *corps de ballet* supposed to be fairies. Where the nursery had been, there stood a huge well between the mouldering walls of a ruin, and all the private life of the family was banished to the attic for weeks.

After my father had his own house built in Weimar, the proportion of the festivals grew with the extra space. Once the guests, including Their Royal Highnesses, found it emptied of all objects of western civilization and converted into a Japanese house. The dinner, however, was European, and you could sit on normal chairs to watch the performance of two Japanese plays. An army of experts had been busy getting everything genuine and correct, led by Herr von Brand, former German Ambassador to the Chinese Court, who knew Japan very well. His garden joined ours, and his collections of eastern art made the first and most lasting impression of art on me. The plays were directed by Thea von Harbou, later of film fame. At that time she was a young girl, Actress to the Court and, in her spare time, a writer of short stories. She it was who gave me my first lessons on the violin. At the Hoftheater she played the lead, and I saw her several times on the stage. She appeared in *Die Rabensteinerin*, romantic trash in a medieval setting by Ernst von Wildenbruch. The author used to live in Weimar and his name is a peculiar example of the taste of Germany's reigning house. Translated it means almost literally 'wild oats' and was created to indicate the fact that he was an illegitimate Hohenzollern. Romantic, isn't it! Wildenbruch's lasting contribution to German literature is *The Noble Blood*, a short story about Prussian cadets, perhaps the best one of its kind.

When a certain very beautiful and titled young actress was appointed, Weimar revelled in a thrilling rumour. She was

said to have been carefully selected as mistress to the Grand-Duke, but, such are the intrigues of the High and Mighty, nobody had told her what her part was to be until she had signed the contract to play the lead at the Hoftheater. The beauty, like a good girl, resisted the dark plan and drove the Duke raving mad by her refusal. There is certainly not the slightest doubt that the actress would have resisted, but I am afraid she was never led into temptation. Still, this kind of gossip is a splendid example of what rumours were popular in Weimar. Nowadays one would talk about 'displacements' to explain them. Anyhow, in Weimar, people used to live in bygone times, when an appointed Mistress to the Court was nothing much out of the way. It was absurd to imagine the Grand-Duke as a character in such a story. Well, he lost his temper easily, but everybody agreed that he was a good husband and a model father to his children.

During rehearsals for one of the Japanese plays — it was the famous *Terakoia*, *The Village School* — I played the double part of the little prince and the vassal's son who is going to be sacrificed in the royal place. It was a most exciting experience. I had no conception of the theatre as an art apart from common life. Life was a continual performance anyway. Fancy dress, uniform, court dress or costume — what was the difference? I knew my own father in silver-and-blue hussar's litevka or blue-and-red infantry tunic as well as in green-and-gold with a large golden key dangling on his back, and he was always playing a part. I knew Herr von G., the Master of Ceremonies, who in *Terakoia* played my father, the faithful vassal — he was certainly a faithful vassal in everyday life but now he donned a kimono instead of an embroidered dress-coat, and two long swords instead of one thin one like a switch. Playing these various parts was always called Duty. Everybody was always somehow 'on duty', at Court, in the army, in church; and the rest of your life was not very different. It was duty as well.

You were always supposed to know your part and to play it — never mind your thoughts, feelings or other things that had nothing to do with your role. To talk about what you secretly believed to be the ‘real things’ was naughty. So you had better learn your part and perform it to the best of your ability. Then everything was quite easy. It was all in the play: career, marriage, children, honours, and in the end the funeral with exactly as many soldiers to follow the coffin as befitted your rank. Some scenes promised to be exciting, such as the one in which, following the cue, Romance would take the stage. Or war, a wonderful war with beating drums and flying colours, the most glorious of all gentlemanly games. All you had to do was to grow up and wait, it would all come in time. There were dark acts to be expected as well, called the Seriousness of Life. A thing very difficult to understand, for sometimes it seemed to be connected with the gay fancy-dress business of the Court and sometimes with nice old Herr E., the banker, or with other very different things. Old E., with his silvery side-whiskers, looked rather like the Russian Ambassador, spoke in an impressive, soft voice and was a Jew. It simply was not done to mention the last fact. Like all the things which were ‘not done’ there was obviously no reason for it, because asking for reasons in such cases was naughty. All these rather disturbing things I easily reconciled in the general conception: it is all a play, sometimes pleasant or funny or disagreeable and always to be taken seriously. Never do or say anything which is not in the part — that is the explanation for the Not Dones. On the stage they call it improvising, and when I heard my father using that phrase as he talked about his duties, it was so burdened with disgust that I felt it really must be something very evil.

I think with a little effort I could remember the whole of my part in *Terakoia* to-day. I took it seriously. Too seriously indeed for my mother’s liking, for she cancelled my engagement as an actor shortly before The Day, because

'it diverts the boy from his lessons'. She was right. Almost everything did. And most of all, the ban on the theatre.

When I said before that I had no conception of the theatre as something apart from real life, I do not mean to say that I did not see a difference. I had my own ideas about the subject and rather complicated ones, too. Certainly children observe, and think, much more than is generally believed. They just don't tell for the same reason that the initiated don't disclose the secret, for lack of adequate words and concepts. Later they forget, or at least nearly all of them seem to. Translated into 'grown-up language' the theatre seemed to me equal in rank to other performances — court ceremony, military duty or church ritual — and only differed from them by the introduction of a specific component: the creative spirit. The other plays were fixed long ago. Court dresses, for instance, were essentially eighteenth century in style, and ceremonies were venerable because of their age. You were forbidden to ask why it was like this, and certainly it would have been impossible to add one jot to them. Therefore the question could not arise: what is the best way to perform the play of Life? You just started acting according to the old manuscripts. On the theatrical stage quite the contrary. Here they did not play Life as it is, but Life as it could be if you were allowed to use your imagination.

In a way I think I was not very far from the truth.

One of the major events on the stage of the Hoftheater was Isadora Duncan's first performance. It was a real sensation for Weimar. Not because she had just set out to revive the art of dancing, but for quite another reason. All that people seemed to know about her was that she danced bare-footed. Never mind that her costume was something like a long waving nightgown, close to the neck which certainly showed much less than a lady's court dress, and under which there were hardly any feet to be seen. The mere idea that the sacred boards of Goethe's stage

should be trodden by anything naked was too appalling. On the other hand, it was, after all, a Grand-Ducal theatre, and so nothing really immoral could ever happen there. So Society went to enjoy the vicious performance in safety and with the consent of the Most High. I was not allowed to go, naturally, and not supposed to hear what was said about it. But children always hear everything as far as my experience goes. And I saw photographs not only of the 'bare-footed dancer', as people called her, but also of her first school for children. I cannot say that I envied those children. I simply did not quite believe in their reality. It looked too much like my conception of heaven, and even if they were real, it was evident that I would never share their life. There was the career waiting and I would not have time for anything heavenly.

I knew as well that I could not become an actor, though I did not exactly know why. There were always a few titled ones at the Hoftheater, so it might have been a possible career. Still it obviously was not — of that I felt sure from casual remarks. But why should I not have my own theatre while there was time? There was always a lot of lumber about the house, from festivals and bazaars, which came in handy for properties. It was a miracle of cunning and organization to manage the building of our stage without attracting the attention of the grown-ups. With a gang of friends as helpers I converted the large attic, which covered the whole extent of the house. We used about a mile of coloured muslin and crêpe paper, painted fanciful decorations and made costumes. I was playwright, manager, actor, and director in one, thus avoiding a source of many difficulties in comparison with other theatres. The setting of the first play so produced was as a matter of course Japanese. My vengeance for the lost first part. After the dress rehearsal the secret could no longer be kept, and my parents, for once, yielded to the *fait accompli*. I was even allowed to ask the friends and relatives of the actors to attend the first night. I made liberal use of this

permission and my parents had to put up with the most democratically mixed crowd they had ever seen about the house. For the first time they met friends of mine, of whose existence they had never dreamed. The audience included a policeman off duty ('In which regiment have you served, my man?') and two real actors from the Hoftheater, a married couple I had made friends with on my way from school. My parents stood the ordeal with wonderful poise, and perhaps the most important gain of the evening was that they did not object to my going to see my actor-friends openly from then onwards. About fifteen years later, when I was a member of the stage department of the Bauhaus in Weimar, we students volunteered as supers for Gerhard Hauptmann's *Florian Geyer*, and I found myself on the boards beside my old friend. The Hoftheater had changed into the Nationaltheater since the revolution, but good old Brandes was the same genial fellow and I hope he and his wife are still on the job. A great number of actors grew old at the Hoftheater, if they did not make the jump to Berlin.

At Shrovetide the Academy of Arts and the Academy of Music used to organize big festivals with pageantry and dances, and literally the whole town, not excluding the Court, joined in the rollicking fun. One year the theme was the state visit of an Indian Rajah to the Court of Weimar. The exotic prince was impersonated, I believe, by Herr Determann, later one of the founders of the Bauhaus. He arrived by train from the nearest village and had so solemn an official welcome that travellers took it as genuine. From the station he rode on a huge white dummy-elephant to the palace and the Grand-Duke could not refuse to receive him when practically all the inhabitants of his capital assembled, shouting for their sovereign to greet the noble visitor.

After all, the Court themselves once arranged a fancy-dress festival on a large scale. Practically the whole population attended, not only the people who were admissible at

Court. For some days Weimar stepped back into Goethe's time, not just mentally as usual, but in actual appearance. Everybody dressed in early Biedermeier costume, the Grand-Duke playing his ancestor Duke Ernst August, my father his own grandfather the Prime Minister. The lovely old hunting castle and park of Tiefurt made a very adequate setting for the most striking example of that strange Weimar mixture of play and reality, past and present, theatre and life. The main features of the festival were the performances of two of Goethe's plays, *The Fishergirl* and *The Plundersweiler Fair*. The plays were played in the park without a stage. A small rivulet crosses the wide open lawns of the park, and the loveliness of one spot where a wooded slope forms the opposite bank inspired Goethe to take it as a setting for his little musical comedy *Die Fischerin*. It is just a sweet nothing, as impossible on a stage as it was charming in these circumstances. As the play was made to measure for the spot, there were all the advantages without the drawbacks of an open-air theatre: living trees and a real river, the neighbours' search-party with flaming torches coming from far over the ridge in natural dusk. It was the imaginative world of musical comedy brought as near to reality as possible. Still there was a public to indicate a different world, even if it was a fantastic one itself by virtue of its Biedermeier costumes. In the second play the whole of the reality went topsy-turvy and no boundary was left between performer and audience, the theatre and everyday life. *The Plundersweiler Fair* was built up on a large meadow just as a fair in Goethe's time might have stood in that very field. People in the costume of the period went round from stall to stall, to admire the attractions. All were visitors to the fair, whether they were paid or had paid for being there, the public acting in the performance, actors playing the part of visitors, and all the crowd playing their own grandparents. The play shifts from one point to another, the crowd follows to where a new attraction starts, and out of the crowd



arises still another incident which is part of the play. Then in one of the stalls a theatrical company begins to play 'The Story of Good Queen Esther and Bad King Haman'. Actors acting actors — it was all a tangle.

And the Duke, playing another Duke, was still a real sovereign and made his entrance with all the solemn ceremonies of his rank in the world of reality.

Still, in that 'real' world which ceased to exist only some twenty years ago were many things that would look unreal to most people nowadays. Ladies sliding down almost to a kneeling position when Royalty crossed their way in the street were an everyday sight in Weimar. The curtsy in court style is a very graceful movement, but it needs some training. I have seen it performed in public only once since the war, when a lady greeted the King and Queen in the streets of London in this fashion. She was a German and obviously had not forgotten her training. In the eyes of the public the little scene seemed to be somewhat out of place but it would have fitted perfectly in old Weimar. The streets there were a kind of living-room anyway. Nobody was ever in a hurry, a galloping coach was something worthy of your special attention and an automobile a first-class sensation. When Herr von D., one of the chamberlains, actually bought one of these infernal modern machines, it caused some embarrassment and even aroused suspicion. Instinctively it was felt that any form of mechanics did not fit in with the general style of life. 'It smells of commercialism. And it is not aristocratic' was the comment of Baron von E. when he discussed the event with my mother. She calmly replied: 'I don't quite follow. What is aristocratic after all — the things people like you and I and Herr von D. choose to do? I can't find any other definition.' By which answer she stated that in all reverence to tradition she was quite ready to create a new one if necessary. Few members of society shared this point of view.

When a few years before the war the first experimental

flying unit of the army was founded, one of the young pilot-officers paid a visit to the Court. The fact that he was a Guardsman and of very good family secured him a hearty welcome, and the very first flying man was certainly a sensation. But some people did not feel quite at ease, as the lieutenant's occupation seemed somewhat akin to circus productions, as it was put, and he admitted frankly that he had to attend to his machine with his own hands 'which sometimes got greasy'. Hardly a gentleman's job. Acrobatic and dirty.

In the following year the young man crashed. An obituary notice appeared in the papers wherein his colonel paid tribute to his valuable services and said that he had just been due for promotion out of his turn. His mother donned deep mourning and hastened to the place of disaster only to find him comparatively merry, after a slight concussion, in his bed in hospital surrounded by many wreaths. He had insisted on having them all brought up to his room so that he might have, as he put it, the rare pleasure of enjoying his own funeral. The explanation was that nobody could dream of anybody escaping alive from a plane crash, and therefore they took the telegram 'Lieutenant von X. crashed, plane completely destroyed' for a self-evident message of the officer's death. There was nothing to be done but to cut off some red tape and to promote him out of turn.

His plane, an Albatross, was the first ever seen in Weimar, and the first one I ever boarded, if only to be taxied round the field. A visit to the moon could not possibly have been more important. It certainly was not of this, my world, and it tore open the curtain to another one: a world where safety is not given away, where you have to rely upon yourself without the help of fixed parts in the play.

The flying officer became my undisputed model and hero, though I never met him again. But soon we got some more flying to see in Weimar. The Residenz was to be the goal of an international long-distance air race. The planes started

from Gotha, some thirty miles away if I am not mistaken; it may be nearer. As the promoters could not guarantee whether there would be any flying at all, it was made known that a red flag on the hangar should mean 'Flying' and a black one 'No Flying'. Countless field-glasses were watching the flag-pole and in the afternoon a red flag called out the whole of the population. When we arrived a fair wind had stopped the beginning of the performance; and accordingly a black flag streamed over the hangar. Thousands flocked back to town, only to be lured out again by the red flag, a game which was repeated three times. It was nearly sunset when the first, and so far the only machine arrived, piloted by the Frenchman Jeanin. Smiling with flashing white teeth in a dark and handsome face, he was almost crushed to death, and his plane was only saved from the souvenir-hunters with the greatest difficulty. For the first — and last — time in my life I turned autograph-hunter and succeeded.

The hangar belonged to a Flying School, and there was an Aero Club somewhere in town, but I never saw much of their activities. And since at the same time all the cabs for hire in the streets of Weimar were, of course, drawn by horses, it was regarded as a revolutionary invention when they had taxi-works set up. It had been a terrific blow to old Number Nine, or so he said. He was the most noted cabman in town, called by everybody The Bent Nine, because he was a hunchback. Almost a sight in himself, he used to show visitors round, pointing out with his long whip the famous buildings as well as members of the noted Weimar families. 'There you see the most beautiful girl of Weimar, Fräulein von N. Her great-grandfather was friend of Goethe's.' When I was once on leave during the war I saw The Bent Nine for the last time. He still wore the traditional uniform of the cabmen, red-and-blue tunic with floating cape and white top-hat, enthroned on his box, a landmark of the good old time amidst the fading glory of the Residenz.

As a matter of course the new enthusiasm for flying was merely theoretical at the beginning. But soon I started building models, which was by no means as easy as it is to-day when you can buy your material at any corner and ready cut into the bargain. Plywood was not yet invented, and the purchase of thin laths was a difficulty. Once my father found a bill in my room: 'Woodwork for aeroplane cut and delivered — 5 marks' — which gave him rather a shock. My pocket-money was fifty pfennigs a week and I could not possibly have saved five marks, and how could a few laths be as expensive as that?

I told him truthfully that the bill had been paid by the joint efforts of the former theatrical troupe, which had just taken up the new hobby. But I preferred not to reveal the whole truth. In fact this was only one of many bills, and we had gone a big step further. In a boys' annual I had found the description of a full-size glider plane and the machine was actually just about to be assembled in a garden shed. It had a wing span of, I believe, seven metres, and I wonder why the model has not become more popular. It was easy to build and we had very good sport with it.

The wings of rectangular shape and slightly profiled were attached to a fuselage which looked somewhat like a ladder. There was a horizontal tail-plane but no rudders. The pilot hung between the wings holding the uprights of the ladder in his arm-pits, and all the steering was done by shifting the weight of the legs. You started by running down a slope, carrying the machine. With some skill you could achieve long gliding jumps which for seconds gave you the sensation of flying.

All went well as long as there was no wind, but the structure was definitely not stable enough to stand the slightest gust, and the most desperate kicking with your legs was no substitute for the missing ailerons. One day I jumped merrily downhill into a gentle breeze. The first hop was higher than usual, much to my pleasure. I cannot guess how

many feet I was above ground-level, as it is very misleading to look down a slope. You might be only six feet up, perpendicularly measured, but you cannot help adding the whole height of the hill. It is rather like jumping on skis. Anyway, I soon found myself in a sideslip without an effective remedy. While I was desperately fidgeting, one wing crashed into the slope and it was my good luck that it took the shock and bounced away. If there had been landing-gear instead of my legs, it would have been smashed. So all that happened was that I found myself entangled in a mess of broken wood and the most awkward consequence was that I had to find an excuse at home for a torn suit and a nice collection of bruises. I admitted to having had a fight, which already was a major crime. But I wonder what action my father would have taken had he but known the truth, and how I managed never to let him know.

I wanted the plane to be rebuilt, with some alterations such as V-shaped wings and stabilizing tail-piece, but the gang would not grant another budget for our air-force. So flying activities were restricted to parachute-jumping which I took up at our country place.

My parents used to stay in Weimar for the Court season, but during the summer months we went to Hesse to the country. It was a most beautiful place, and I always felt more at home there than in the Residenz. Two houses, an old water-mill, stables and barns made a lovely group around a spacious courtyard. It was approached from the village by an avenue of poplars cutting through wide meadows, and the background was formed by a low hill and the old trees of the park upon it. Ours was the house on the hill-side. Built in 1457, it looked like a toy castle with its embrasured tower and many-angled roofs. It was a merry sight with its whitewashed walls, jutting red beam-heads and green shutters, and though diminutive in measurements it had all the attractions of a castle, such as a certified ghost, subterranean passages and secret rooms. My mother had a

foot-bridge built, connecting the dining-room on the first floor with a terrace on the hill, and the blossoming shrubs grew into the windows of my room. That room was a real den with a very low ceiling and narrow windows, right beside the tower where strange and inexplicable noises at night -- sliding steps and rattling of doors -- had led to the belief in the ghost. In fact I tried several times to find a natural explanation but failed to do so, and was only able to confirm that the noises were distinctly audible. Once when my door started rattling at night, I followed the ghostly steps up to the attic where they vanished in a heap of old furniture and household rubbish. Though the sound seemed to be only a yard or two ahead there was nothing to be seen in the light of a powerful electric torch. No particular story was attached to our ghost, and we were satisfied that it was certainly no ancestor of ours sent back to earth to expiate his crimes, as it was only my great-grandfather who had bought the estate, ghost and all, when he came from Holland. In my early childhood the place belonged to my mother's father. He used to live in the house opposite, a spacious yellow building bearing all the delightful simplicity of the early nineteenth-century style. His rooms were filled to overflowing with hunting and fishing trophies, old and new weapons of all kinds and countless paintings of his own. He took his art seriously, though when I knew him he had not had an exhibition for decades. There was a lovely little garden, no more than sixty yards square, squeezed between his house and a barn, and on the wall of that barn he had painted a large panorama of Vesuvius as he had seen it from his Italian studio many years ago. At dusk he used to walk across his demesne smoking an old-fashioned German pipe nearly four feet long, the bowl of which contained half a pound of tobacco. He always spoke German in the dialect of the peasants of that part of the country, but he was very proud of his Dutch extraction and liked to relate that once upon a time his family had supplied not only the Prime

Minister of Holland but also the Commanders-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy and the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. The farmers adored him for the easy manner in which he associated with them and for his rollicking far-fetched hunting stories, in the invention of which he was indeed an artist. I am very much afraid none of his anecdotes can be translated from the Hessian dialect.

When my grandfather died, my mother's brother moved into the house. He was a retired army major who had resigned his commission on marrying. Nobody could ever wish for a more respectable and, moreover, a more beautiful wife. But the lady in question was a commoner, and this was Germany and Germany before the war. So my uncle was transferred to an infantry regiment of the line garrisoned in the dullest small town imaginable, after having been in a crack regiment of grenadiers in one of the most elegant cities of the country. Shortly afterwards he took his father's death as an excuse to retire. He had a son about my age who became my best friend.

This boy was about ten years old, I believe, when he started the strangest game I have ever heard of. We all used to have small, flat tin-soldiers, and hundreds of them. Being soldiers' sons we knew how the officers of the General Staff used to conduct battles on the map with exactly the same toys, and we imitated them, writing out orders for every movement and taking everything very seriously. But my cousin A. went further. His soldiers represented the army of a minor German *Land* and he was the ruler and supreme army-chief of that country. He kept an exact roll of his forces and knew the name of every officer, promoting or expelling them according to merit. With this well-organized army he calmly set out to conquer the world bit by bit. First the rest of Germany, then Europe, and at last the rest of the globe. The battles were played one by one and duly recorded. They were not always victorious, but as the

growing empire had made the introduction of a larger diplomatic service necessary, sometimes he would help himself out with a bloodless victory. By and by a library of big note-books grew into a voluminous work of fictitious history with countless maps and 'original documents' attached.

I was head over heels under the influence of Kipling and opposed to my cousin's Oldenburgian world empire. I was deeply sorry I could not stop him as he had the advantage of going on with the game when I was away, for I had to return to Weimar from time to time. Perhaps this was not quite fair, but it certainly was effective.

Like all children's games these dreams of world domination were rather significant, and not in the obvious way alone. I think the most interesting feature was that the boy did not start with the idea of making the world German, but picked out one of the smaller *Länder* for the part of the dominating country. He had no particular reason in favour of the one he chose as he was neither born there nor had he ever lived in it. Children's ideas are usually a simplified image of men's general feelings and ideas. They just take on as much as trickles through deep enough to reach them, and I give this as a tip to the Institute of Public Opinion. In fact there was not much German nationalism; or, as far as it did exist, it was a thing to be aired on special occasions such as Sedan Day or the Kaiser's Birthday. The feelings usually associated with the word 'patriotism' were lavished on the *Land*. Conscripts in Hesse never spoke about 'joining the army', but of 'joining the Prussians', and hardly anything was ever referred to as being German. It was just Hessian or Bavarian or Saxon. They kept watch over their home-rule and special privileges with great zeal, but nobody earnestly advocated separatism. It needed the war to make the word 'German' really popular. Up to that time it represented little more than a technical point of minor importance. To me it seems self-evident that you cannot love a country in its



entirety, at least it seems impossible to have or to develop a genuine affection towards an area defined by political frontiers which can only be seen when properly marked by coloured posts. Any person living on a frontier will confirm that what he calls his home, his beloved country, includes the hills on the other side. And you cannot expect a life-long mountain-dweller to have any stronger affection for plains a hundred miles away but within the same frontiers, than for plains in a foreign country. Having a language in common does not help much. German as spoken in the north-western provinces is hardly different from the Dutch dialect across the border and unintelligible to Bavarians or East-Prussians. And speaking English does not prevent a New-Yorker feeling a foreigner in Devon. So what people love is first a landscape they feel at home in, and after that they may attach a meaning to the word country, but the meaning of the word is purely metaphorical. Tradition will perpetuate this idea for many generations, but the idea itself has no reality and it is bound to give way when a new and powerful idea sets up its own tradition. People will be ready to die and, what is more difficult, to live for the narrow, actual country they can see and love. And they will live and die for an idea which might be called The Country. There was no German tradition. The construction of 1871 was not intended as a continuation of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and it had no Idea of its own. The whole play of Power and Glory in the imperial court was no substitute for an Idea. It was a firework display to brighten the party once or twice a year.

At the other hand the small Federal States, the *Länder*, were very much alive with local tradition. They had already outlived a number of different German realms. And the average German simply loved old customs and traditions. The part of Hesse where the estate was situated is an especially good example. There peasants' costumes were still frequently worn, though in our village in a more simplified

form. A couple of miles away men could be seen in their fields in blue embroidered linen smocks and fur caps, and girls in white stockings and kilted skirts which hardly came below the knees. In my early childhood the night-watchman went round with halberd and lantern and horn. Later he donned the paraphernalia of his office only when he came down to the estate at New Year's Eve. Then he blew a roaring blast on the horn and sang out the old traditional formula: 'I wish the Herr baron and his wife and children and all his manservants and maidservants peace, joy, health, a good life and Eternal Bliss in the new year which is coming.' Then he got his traditional large brandy and we never ventured to tell him that though we hoped to partake of eternal happiness one day, we were not particularly anxious to enter into it so soon.

Social customs among the peasants were almost as intricate as in old China. For instance, every caller had to be asked to have a cup of coffee. He was expected to refuse and had to be asked again. If a third offer was made it had to be accepted. Then his cup was filled again and again until he turned it upside down. But this was only the signal to start all over again with the three questions and he had to fill up once more. Only when he had turned the cup over a second time and put the spoon on top of it would it have been bad manners to ask him more than twice to have another cupful and he would then be allowed to stop drinking. So the minimum was two cups, and it was a bit of an ordeal for the parson to go round at Easter Sunday when he had to call on the parents of all his candidates for confirmation. His choice was to offend the villagers or to drink perhaps twenty cups of strong coffee. One parson went home and died from heart-failure after a round of such visits.

There was a special pew for the estate at the church. The seat was very narrow and we were able to move only with the greatest difficulty. Luckily anyone who had the right to sit in it enjoyed the privilege of not having to rise during the

service except for the benediction at the end. Usually my cousin and I were picked out as the dignified representatives of the gentry. We hated it but it was just another of those ceremonial plays and comparatively easy to bear if you took an interesting book with you wrapped in black paper.

Ein eigentümlicher Fehler der Deutschen ist, dass sie,  
was vor ihren Füßen liegt, in den Wolken suchen.

SCHOPENHAUER — *Zur Rechtslehre und Politik*

As a rule when in the countryside we were left to ourselves. Nobody bothered much when we tried hard to break our necks by jumping from the roof of a barn with a home-made parachute or, by a scheme we invented, of sliding down to the ground from the top of the spruces as high as a house. But still these things had to be done secretly like our occasional nightly excursions into the forests.

One night I went for a stroll all by myself in the wood and ran into a bunch of boys who were camping. Or so I would describe my discovery nowadays. At that time I had no word for the phenomenon and stared at the boys as if they were Martians. Bare heads. Bare knees. Open collars and no tie. Guitars and a camp-fire. It was far too fantastic to be true. It was violence to at least half a dozen basic 'not dones'. I had never seen anything like it. I spoke to them and they in a friendly and matter-of-fact way asked me to sit down.

This was another sensation. Boys, unless they were from my school or from the village, were enemies or at least suspect strangers. These seemed to take me for a friend. They were the first Wandervögel I ever saw. At least that is what they called themselves; but the word meant nothing to me. No, there was no teacher with them, no grown-up at all. And they came all the way from Oldenburg after walking for many days. No, they were not all at the same school. It was a miracle.

To make it clear at the outset: the Wandervogel had nothing to do with the Boy Scout movement. It was a

romantic and individualistic revolt almost without organization and without any educational or political purpose whatever. It began with walking and camping, then taking up collecting folk-songs and dances, in short, a revolt against home and school life amongst young boys in a Berlin suburb. And soon it became an avalanche carrying with it a strange collection of minor movements, petty philosophies and odd ideals out of which the original purpose always emerged in all its glory: to have no purpose, but to be young and romantic. Only when the first set reached the university did they try to find a formal programme. They founded a loose organization called *Freideutsche Jugend*. The name is untranslatable because the word *freideutsch* is composed of Free and German and belongs to the numerous amalgamated terms which are meant to convey not only the obvious meaning of the two separate words but a new and deep one. The formula under which the older Wandervögel were united ran thus: We shape our lives according to our free will and we are responsible to our own conscience alone.

As a rule, the cry for freedom of conscience arises only when you know beforehand what ruling practices or teachings your conscience is objecting to, and what morality you are going to put in their place.

The Freideutsche Jugend could never find — and never really attempted to find, in spite of long-winded discussions — anything like a concrete programme. It would necessarily have been political, and politics were banned on principle at the outset. So what it amounted to more or less was: Find out what the older generation are doing and tell them not to do it.

This demand for abstract freedom as such was utterly German. And utterly impossible. Like energy which is stored away and accumulated somewhere without any purpose, it only waited for someone to make use of it. The German social system was not elastic enough to find or dig channels for the torrent, and so the torrent went to drive

the mills of anybody who cared to build one on its shifting banks.

Many a strange and enigmatic feature of modern German history can be easily understood from a knowledge and understanding of the Youth Movement. Not that the Wandervogel or the Freideutsche Jugend or similar bodies ever played any important part in politics. I do not want to make out that they were some dark, nefarious conspiratorial organization pulling strings behind the scenes like the modern boggy-men — Bolshevism, Capitalism, Jews, Freemasons or Catholics. The Youth Movement in Germany only seems to me to be the most striking symptom of an habitual German state of mind which, obviously, takes on other forms besides this one. It is true that the Real Thing exists behind its phenomenal appearance and we could talk about it in abstract terms. But people are fed up with the Real Thing. They know all about it, so it seems, and nobody is the wiser for it. So let us talk about the good old symptoms and now and then cast knowing glances at each other, for we know it is only the Superstructure or a Displaced Something-or-Other Complex that we are talking about.

I said before that the Youth Movement never played any important part in politics. That is correct in so far as it never formed a party and was never backed by one. It was only indirectly that certain influences reached public life from that source. Later all the parties founded their own groups of young people and children, and used to refer to them as The Communist — or Democratic or Nationalist — Youth Movement. This was nothing but the now flourishing practice of adopting the enemy's name as a useful disguise. The original movement of the Wandervogel and Freideutsche Jugend was particularly proud of being the very opposite of such associations-with-a-purpose. If any clear statement ever came out of their ranks it was the emphatically repeated war-cry: Don't let yourself be utilized for the purposes of the older generation. Beat your own track!

With the explicitly claimed right of youth to act spontaneously and according to instinct, the original Movement adopted certain habits and activities of a pattern which was later taken up by all the so-called youth movements. It began with clothing. As I said, the most striking feature in the appearance of the Wandervögel I met were the shirts with open attached collars and the bare knees. I don't know what English boys looked like about 1910 but I remember very well that the first Wandervögel who tried to attend classes at school in shorts were sent home and told to 'dress decently', and if there was a repetition they were punished. It was the same with the open shirts, and when later a kind of coloured bush-tunic became the fashion with the Wandervogel boys, the first one seen wearing it in the streets of Weimar nearly caused a riot.

Smoking and drinking were 'not stylish' even among the older members, for the tendency to adopt all the ideas of the so-called Reform of Life was extremely powerful. Vegetarianism and Nature Healing were not essential but they were widely spread throughout the community. In fact they only became popular through the Movement.

In the early years it was only the little groups of boys which were found tramping in the country-side; later girls had their own troops, and by and by mixed groups emerged. was much discussed in all these circles whether this was right or not. Outside it was attacked without discussion. But here in the Youth Movement the debate on co-education was opened for the first time in Germany. And it is not an exaggeration to state that everything connected with school reform came originally from them. Famous experiments like Wickersdorf or the Odenwald School, the influence of which can be traced through the whole world to the present day, are unthinkable without the Movement.

When the first mixed groups established themselves, a campaign of far-reaching consequences was launched against them by one of the oldest members of the Wandervogel.

Herr Hans Blüher, an anti-Semitic writer of doubtful philosophical rank, declared the intruding girls to be a danger which was bound to lead to the decay of the Movement. His argument was a peculiar one. Basing himself on half-digested Freudian theories he preached that the proper merit of the Wandervogel was the establishment of what he called the Male Covenant, meaning a social system resting upon homosexuality. According to his point of view the foundation of the first groups of boys had been an act of subconscious inverted eroticism. Freudians will declare this a mere truism, but then pre-war Germany was not exactly given to psychoanalysis. Nowadays we are getting used to being told that the most astonishing things dwell in our subconscious minds and nobody bothers as long as they stay there. But Herr Blüher went further. He wanted the boys to become conscious of what had sent them walking and camping in the countryside together. Frankly, he advocated, although in terms of nobleness and honour, active homosexuality.

Actually Herr Blüher did not matter very much and his advice was hardly taken to any considerable extent. But he provided certain people with a nice, handy case against the movement. His teachings gained a belated success only long after the Youth Movement had vanished, in the philosophy of Herr Hitler's friend and Chief of Staff, Röhm. So far his theories were only used to hunt inconvenient persons like the great pioneer of school reform, Gustaf Wyneken. As the case against co-education was hardly strong enough to wreck his work, a certain part of public opinion took delight in digging out the old theory. Wyneken was convicted on a charge of homosexuality on the evidence of an eleven-year-old pupil. Everyone who knew Wyneken and his work was convinced that he was completely innocent. He was sent to prison for one year and his work was almost ruined. But who bothered about the difference between 'subconscious erotic influence in education' and palpable homosexuality? Any experienced judge at a juvenile court or any psychologist will



confirm that it is easy enough to find a witness amongst boys of ten to fourteen if one wants to. The Wyneken case was not the only one. It became a handy precedent for the persecution of many school reformers.

If the credit for school reform belongs almost entirely to Youth Movement, there were other things emerging from that rich source which were perhaps of minor importance but which were certainly widespread. Germany never had a Cecil Sharp, and the collecting of the many and beautiful old folk-dances in the country was left to the roving boys and girls. It was not done systematically; the Wandervögel just came across the last relics of these dances and took them up with a sound instinct. In later years they published the first printed collections. There are only very few of the German folk-dances as elaborate and elegant as English Morris or Sword Dances but generally you find in them many movements very much akin to The Old Mole or Scottish reels.

From the beginning the guitar was the favourite instrument of the Wandervogel. Later violin and flute were taken up. Dance-drums as in England were never in use in Germany. Most of the dances are rounds and have to be sung. And the Germans have always been very much given to singing. In spite of this they were just about to lose their treasury of old folk-songs, had not the Youth Movement arisen. It was an artist, Hans Breuer, one of the oldest members, who first went to collect them. The effect of his endeavours was the *Zupfgeigenhans'l*, the first collection of folk-songs to become really popular all over Germany. It soon became one of the main pillars of the movement. At my school in Weimar it was banned for its immorality; and not only at my school. However, if this leads anyone into the temptation of purchasing the lovely little volume he may be disappointed not to find anything nearly as racy as 'My father kept a boarding-house'. What he will find are charming German versions of 'Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre' or 'There is a Tavern in

the Town' which show that in basic matters people all over the world feel pretty much alike.

When I met the first Wandervogel boys at night in the forest, it was the songs that made me spellbound right away. I knew that I was going to join that brotherhood and that my parents would never let me join it. When I spoke about it to my new friends they told me that mine was quite an ordinary case. Most boys were not allowed to join the Movement but managed somehow to find excuses when they wanted to attend evening sing-songs or to go away on their travels. It was war against the old, and everything is fair in war.

Like a good statesman I first tried to avoid war by peaceful negotiation. So I asked the boys to see me on the estate and to meet my parents. My guests were received with the utmost politeness and as they displayed fairly good manners I scored one point at the beginning. Then I opened direct negotiations and spoke frankly to my father. Like a good boy I promised not to take up arms and scored another point as my father responded that he appreciated such a loyal attitude. Then he added that it was a wise attitude too, because if I really wanted to join the Movement, his actions would be anything but peaceful, and I should do well to realize that I had not a ghost of a chance, now that he was forewarned. I tried to withdraw in a dignified manner.

When I came back to Weimar, I kept my promise not to join the Wandervogel behind my father's back. But now that I knew about the Movement, I could not but find out which of the boys at school were members. They had kept very much to themselves and there was no propaganda. Sooner or later the kind of boys they wanted would find their way to them. It was only at school that I saw my new friends but as a matter of course the life of the Wandervogel became a paradise in my imagination, the road to which had been barred by a promise freely given.

If for no other reason, out of mere curiosity I was eager to learn. But still I hated school and, I think, not without good

reason. It had a good reputation which was due to the fact that it was the only place for the families of court society to send their boys to, short of their being sent away from Weimar. But the system of lessons was bound to drive pupils as well as teachers to desperation. A duller form of cramming for the leaving-examination is hardly imaginable. The poor, overdriven teachers could find neither the time nor the vigour to make any lessons in the least interesting, and the consequence was quite naturally that you gained nothing but a good training for memorizing undigested material. It was certainly not a scholarly atmosphere, and on the other hand there were practically no sports or games. The whole thing was called a humanistic education and the school a gymnasium. God knows why!

So far I had put up with things as they were, but now that I knew about the romantic revolt of the Youth Movement I became for the first time really distracted from my lessons and it showed clearly enough in my term's report. My parents decided on a change of climate and influence and I was sent to the island of Borkum in the North Sea.

As I was not supposed to leave the school for good, tonsillitis was the excuse for a whole term's absence. Certainly my parents were right in suspecting a disturbing influence from the Wandervogel side. But they did not know to what influences they were delivering their closely guarded son.

Besides being a very popular seaside resort, the island was not only a fortified stronghold of the German coastal defences but also the strongest fortress of anti-Semitism in that country. I wonder whether my parents did not know or did not mind the latter fact. They must have known, but on the other hand I can hardly imagine them being in agreement with anything vulgar or in bad taste. They did not as a rule associate with Jews, but then they hardly associated with any one who did not belong to the select body of people who were admissible at Court. Later I found out that two Society families were indeed not exactly cut but regarded as

somewhat suspect because the ladies of the houses were of Jewish extraction. But that was definitely never mentioned in public, and my parents never objected to my Jewish friends at school. I had a few and I liked them particularly because they were more intelligent and they had keener minds. You could discuss matters with them. But one thing we never dreamt of discussing was their race. Jewish religion was quite another thing and I tried to learn all about it. I wondered why we were told at school that the Christian faith was nothing but the fulfilment of the Old Testament and that the founder of our religion had advised his disciples to keep the whole of the ritual. And then it was all dropped, save for the Ten Commandments, in favour of the new teaching. Why? All I could learn from our teacher was that I was still too young to bother about it. As a matter of fact my Jewish friends did not know the answer either. But the question came back to me in broader and deeper form many years later.

In Borkum there were no Jews. Why should they go to a place which obviously did not want them, and nobody took this Gentile ghetto very seriously? Certain odd people wanted to be left alone there and that was all. There would have been no need for the boisterous ritual which was displayed every evening at the beach. At nightfall, the band struck up what was called the Borkum Anthem, and everybody stood at attention and joined in the song.

To a certain degree you get used to even the most distasteful things and after our experiences since 1933 one might think that the Borkum Anthem was rather harmless. Still it was as offensive and nauseating as anything coming from that quarter might be expected to be. My reaction to that song was rather queer. The first few evenings I understood next to nothing of the words everybody was shouting at the top of their voice. Then by and by I grasped some of the meaning, but only in a totally absent-minded way. It had become a habit with me just to endure ceremonies and other

plays in an attitude prescribed by duty without thinking what was going on or why. The question 'why?' was banned anyway. For a week I stood there at attention, facing the flag on the band's pavilion and humming the well-known melody which had been taken from a patriotic song. The ridiculous situation was ended by an anti-Semitic remark of another boy. The result was a glorious fight. The other boy was stronger and there the matter rested. I should have been more deeply disturbed by the discovery that friends of mine were offended here in public and in a distinctly caddish manner, had it not been for the fact that something else was beginning to disturb me still more.

Like many seaside resorts Borkum was a fishing village and grew to the size of a small town only during the season. To give the children of the shopkeepers, hotel proprietors and officers garrisoned in the fortifications the opportunity to attend classes, the village school had developed into something peculiar. Pupils from all types of schools could continue their lessons there, and as the numbers did not justify more than one school, boys and girls sat in the same classes. This was far from being a modern co-educational experiment and was done for practical reasons only. But incidentally it turned out to be an experiment, that is to say, it can be looked at as such.

We all came from schools where children of the opposite sex were excluded. For us they were something to be despised, to be afraid of, or to be watched with secret curiosity, according to age and temperament. The general view of our elders was obviously that one could not let two people of opposite sex be alone together for a minute. Something forbidden, dreadful but pleasurable, would happen if strong measures were not taken. It is only self-deception to believe that children don't smell these things.

Our teachers were quite decent people; at least they were better than those I knew at Weimar, as they were generally younger; but they were not co-educationists and had no idea

that this type of school asked for a different approach from their side. The consequence was indescribable.

The school had not yet been touched by the influence of the Youth Movement, which, although its purpose was indefinite, at least gave young people an alternative ideal to the usual one of imitating the grown-ups.

In Weimar this imitation seldom went further than the arrangement of secret parties with beer and cigarettes. The promoters were the secretly worshipped heroes of the forbidden Pupils' Association, which imitated the drinking ritual of the university students. Here in Borkum, where opportunity was at hand, it was petting parties and even worse.

I was staying with about a dozen other boys and girls of between ten and sixteen at a kind of boarding house run by one of the teachers. The house was highly recommended and the boarders were accordingly sons and daughters of officers, doctors or state officials.

I am afraid not many people will believe what was actually going on here and the details would shock a good many hard-boiled doctors. Narkover is to be highly recommended in comparison. One night a neglected girl gate-crashed a promiscuous party in one of the sleeping-rooms, turned hysterical and called the whole house out of their beds, including the master and his wife, and the cat was out of the bag. The ensuing scandal ended with a passionate appeal from the master, that we should not breathe a word to our parents. *From* the master, not *to* him!

There is an ironical side to this experience. I was sent to Borkum mainly to be rescued from the evil influences of the Wandervogel. And it was only the little influence I had received from the Youth Movement that rescued me from being dragged in the general smoking, drinking, organized stealing in shops and sexual promiscuity. And they were not preaching morals in the Wandervogel. They just happened to create an atmosphere which protected you against such things as irresponsibility. They might have done the most

irregular things, but they always had a definite reason for what they did; their feelings were always strong and, in many respects, clean. Much later, after the war, when tradition broke down entirely, and responsibility was stretched almost to breaking-point over a much wider range of issues, this led to astonishing consequences.

My parents never learned about the state of affairs they had sent me into. They only wondered why I came back from Borkum more nervous than ever and absolutely unable to concentrate. My father did his best and we had a good talk. Without touching on my experiences, I asked him to release me from my promise not to join the Wandervogel secretly and to let me do it with his consent. He agreed and things were better for a while. Roving in the countryside, singing and talking round the camp-fire — all could have been well.

But then my best friend, a boy of thirteen years, shot himself. He was not a Wandervogel. Why he did it, I have never been able to find out exactly. There was one of the teachers who teased him continually, a very disagreeable, desiccated, sadistic type. We boys were convinced that he had driven the boy to suicide. But then, this explanation only begs the question why such a comparatively great number of German schoolboys should think suicide the only way out of such difficulties.

The school system was very likely to bring sensitive boys into grave difficulties and it did not offer any kind of help against the disturbances which are bound to arise from puberty. People should handle the biological disturbance during that period, whereas all they did was to deny its existence. You cannot expect the balance of the mind to remain undisturbed when a wave of new forces attacks the equilibrium of the body's chemistry. When you treat a casualty from a nose-irritant war-gas, the person concerned will inevitably be mentally depressed and in many cases inclined to commit suicide for purely chemical reasons. I do

not think it useful to ignore that fact just because there is 'no sensible reason why he should feel inclined to suicide'.

But that is exactly what our Wilhelmian parents and teachers did. They neither tried to divert the 'patient' from his disease by offering him games or whatever else might be advocated as a remedy, nor did they offer any kind of help by tackling the problem directly, which in some cases might be the only way. All they did was to tell us that the whole complex was indecent, and should not, and therefore did not, exist. An answer which, of course, was given only when there had been a question, i.e. in rare and desperate cases.

If somebody finds himself in one of the typical situations which sometimes result in suicide, the main features of his state of mind are that he has very little or no strength left and cannot see any way out of the entanglement. If you are unable to decide for yourself, the obvious thing to do is to look for a helpful example amongst people who are strong and sound. Well, what does the adored hero, the model for the nation, the army officer, do if he commits a blunder? Being brave and honest, he shoots himself dead, and the stain on his honour is washed away. For instance when he has been offended by some inferior being (which means by someone who is neither an officer nor a member of a students' duelling association) someone whom he cannot challenge to a duel, or if he cannot pay an honourable debt punctually (only a gambling debt is called honourable) then suicide is the only possible solution. 'After all, he has drawn the conclusion,' people said, 'he has paid with his life.' And it somehow sounded like 'he was killed in action'. It blotted out any real or imaginary dishonour, and the dead man was admired for his gallantry.

So when a schoolboy was dishonoured by a bad term report, why should he not act according to the rules of The Best. After all, you could not challenge your form-master to a duel. Or if the problems of young life were too difficult to solve, why not take a way out which is generally supposed



to be honourable, and let people say, 'After all, he blundered, but he was a gallant boy'? Certainly this does not explain all the suicides, but it explains a good number of them.

The German law did not consider suicide a crime. And even had it done so, it would hardly have prevented the glorification of self-destruction. Such a paradoxical situation was actually created by the law against duelling. For example, if an officer had been offended he only had the choice between following the law, which meant not fighting a duel and being expelled from the army, or following the army's Code of Honour (a complicated, written law), which meant fighting and being condemned to a year's imprisonment in a fortress. The Code of Honour sometimes made life rather difficult. More than once I have seen my father in such a painful situation and I later had the experience myself.

A staggering man appears at the far end of the street. Singing merrily he indicates that he has had just about as much beer as is good for him. There is no earthly reason why he should become offensive towards an officer. Or is there? You never know what will come out of a brain set free by alcohol. He might take a dislike to the King's Coat, he might drop a nasty remark or even aim a blow at you. Your religion might ask you to forgive him as he certainly does not know what he is doing. But the Code of Honour, which is much more binding, will force you either to challenge him to a duel, or, if the fellow belongs to the lower classes, to draw your sword and to cut him in pieces. So our hero, if he is wise, will turn on his heels and go on his way!

There was always a chance to settle the affair without a murder if you happened to be in mufti, but one very seldom was. An officer who could not challenge and did not like to kill his man lost his commission. But after all, he could kill himself instead and at least his honour was redeemed. The streets were very dangerous the day the conscripts were

released after their three years. It was an old custom of theirs to make walking sticks out of steel cleaning-rods adorned with gaudy ribbons and to make the round of all the pubs in town, always with their eyes skinned for the chance of a good fight. They did not mean any harm, it was just traditional to celebrate the new freedom by singing the old *Reserve-Lieder*, cursing the N.C.O.'s and beating up any and every civilian who dared say anything against or in favour of the army. But you did better to keep well out of their way.

The Code of Honour for privates was simpler: If a civilian offends you, finish your beer quietly and walk out. If he aims a blow at you, draw your bayonet or sword. You are not exactly compelled to kill him, but never mind if you do. You get punished only if he gets the better of you. No German soldier off duty ever walked about without his weapon.

As long as my father had not resigned his commission for good, he always had his military servant in the house who sometimes played the part of a footman in a simple, blue livery but on occasions had to don a blue-and-scarlet tunic, with helmet and bayonet complete. But whatever coat he was wearing, his heels clicked thunderously and he shouted his 'Yes, Herr Major' in the dining-room just as on the parade-ground. Even later when my father became a civilian in outer appearance as well, our menservants were always ex-service men, who sang me the jolly old barrack songs and never lost their barrack manners. I used to be on very friendly terms with all of them, but I liked especially the one who played the accordion. I used to squat in the narrow room where he was supposed to clean our boots, and there he played and sang to me sentimental old ballads in the style of 'She was poor, but she was honest'. His time with us ended in disaster. He used to take out one of our maids and he had a quarrel with her one night. I was only six or seven years old at that time and did not know what it was all about. I only remember that he went mad and attacked the girl,

and that several men came to take him away a little later. They had to roll him into a carpet and carry him out, and in the general excitement nobody prevented me from witnessing that pretty awful sight from the nursery window. It actually had been a sudden outburst of a mental disease and I was later allowed to go and see him as I was always asking about the man who had been so friendly to me. He was lying in bed and did not recognize me though he talked to me unintelligibly in a soft voice. I was frightened and found it difficult to maintain the attitude prescribed for the ceremony of Visiting the Sick.

### CHAPTER III

De bon vouloir servir le Roi.

*Motto of the Tankerville.*

It was a chilly day with a misty rain falling, when the sixth-form boy who came regularly to help me with my homework called and suggested I should go for a walk with him. My parents had delegated to him the difficult task of breaking the news which they did not dare tell me themselves. So I learned that my thirteen-year-old friend had shot himself. The shock was terrible, something beyond the remedies of talking or crying. Not only had I lost a very dear friend and in a violent way, but I knew distinctly that, virtually, it might have been myself.

My early conception of life as a play, determined and well regulated from the very beginning, I had lost in the experience of a world outside mine. The easy feeling of predestination had completely gone since I knew that there were people ready to write their own parts in new plays, and not for the stage only but for real life. I admired this attitude as much in the Youth Movement as I detested it in the decadent form which it took at the Borkum boarding school. The belief in determinism of any kind makes you look at unpleasant and problematic things as obstacles of minor importance. In fact there is nothing to worry about when you know that there is only one way for you anyway. But now I felt rather like a domestic animal in the jungle, and I knew that the boy who just had chosen the way out by suicide must have felt the same.

Suicide is a contagious disease. What made me immune against it was certainly nothing but my curiosity. I wanted to know what would be coming next. So I went on marching

like John Brown's soul, leaving behind me not exactly my body, but a kind of larva.

For the first few months after the incident this curiosity was a merely passive, that is, a morbid one, and my parents decided that something had to be done. Without any doubt I was then what is called difficult to educate and if my parents found the task too difficult, they knew what to do. They left the job to an institution which had proved to be a most successful educational machine over two hundred years, and so I was to join the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps at Easter 1914.

Only many years later did I begin to understand how this decision had been possible for my father. The Cadet Corps was a factory where the raw material — children — was put into a mould under tremendous pressure, to be turned out by the hundred as the standard type of the Prussian lieutenant. Whoever wants a product cannot object to the best way of producing it. But then my father was not at all in favour of that type. And not only that. This time I know that he was perfectly aware of certain things he was going to expose me to. It must have been most embarrassing for the old man when he had to try and warn me in dark hints against 'certain boys who might approach me in a certain kind of tender way'. I could have put him at his ease by saying that I knew all about homosexuality and that I was not going to stand any such tricks. But I naturally was still more embarrassed than he was. So I said nothing and just wondered why he was sending me there when he approved neither of the well-known customs and habits nor of the type produced in the Cadet Corps.

The explanation is simply that his was still the world where all has been arranged for the best for all time. The world that has been so and will always be so. And the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps had received the sons of aristocratic families since 1717. So there was no necessity to think about means and ends. On the other hand, my father naturally felt his responsibility and hence the warning.

Actually from the beginning I did not bother too much about such problems as touched me. After all I was going to become something very important in the eyes of my school-mates. I would wear the uniform with the distinctions of His Majesty's Guards, and my superiors would be officers instead of civilian teachers who were very proud if they were allowed to don the uniform of a Reserve Officer once a year. By a stroke of irony one of these 'blinking civilians' was transferred as a captain in reserve to the Cadet Corps during the war when there was a shortage of younger officers. Once he forgot to don his tunic and appeared before the line in a knitted brown jacket. The cadet acting as sergeant-major addressed him solemnly as 'Herr Professor' when reporting the company. The captain went to the house-commander, foaming at the mouth, but the cadet-sergeant, when summoned, defended himself. 'The gentleman was not wearing a uniform. How the devil can I know he is a captain when he doesn't take the trouble to disguise himself as an officer?' Nothing worse happened to him than an official reprimand.

Another incident shows still more strikingly our attitude towards civilians. To every House, consisting of two companies, there belonged a young theological student who wanted to take up the career of army chaplain. At this first stage he did not yet have military rank and went about in civilian clothes. As a training in Christian self-control and gentleness this position was highly recommendable because it was traditional amongst the cadets to drive the 'Heaven's' Fähnrich' frantic. Fähnrich, or Ensign, is the rank of a cadet-officer before he becomes lieutenant. One day Cadet von G. achieved this common aim beyond all expectations and the poor tortured candidate slapped his face. It happened during lessons in a class-room and we were all thunderstruck. A blinking civilian slapping a cadet in His Majesty's uniform! G., a strong boy of fifteen, caught the candidate's jacket at the chest and literally threw the young man across the length of the room. He went crashing into the wooden facing of the

central-heating apparatus and there he sat unable to move while G. stood at attention. After a few minutes the candidate went out of the room, reported to the commander and was never seen again. There were rumours that he joined the Flying Corps and became a successful fighter.

There was a real army chaplain too and he was held in high esteem as he had a uniform with spurs, and captain's rank. He wore his riding-boots and spurs under his robe even at church. Service and prayers were hardly to be distinguished from any other military duty in the manner of their execution. Before every meal and before we went to bed, an officer gave the command: 'Let us — pray!' And the cadet-corporal of the day shouted his prayer like so many commands. It was the object of many bets to substitute similar sounding words meaningless or with ridiculous meaning for the prayers, a bet which was always won as nobody ever paid any attention to the shouting.

A booklet described all our duties inside the barracks. It ordered: 'After the prayer, the officer of the day commands "Go to sleep". The cadet undresses as quickly as possible, puts his clothes in place according to regulations and goes to bed, the right arm under his head, the left arm over the blanket. Then he begins to fall asleep immediately.'

About one hundred cadets — a company — slept in one dormitory. The lights which were strong enough to allow you to read with ease, burned all night long; it was difficult to get used to them. The officer of the day had his own cubicle. At the end of the room was a booklet hanging on a strap wherein such officers who volunteered to control the dormitory during the night used to enter their names. Every hour at least, one of the ex-army N.C.O.'s who served at meals, made the beds and cleaned our boots, went round and did his controlling. All this did not prevent the great majority from doing what my father had tried to warn me about. Anyway, apt as the older cadets were to enforce their fancies upon the younger ones, in these things you were left

alone if you wanted, except that you were in danger of becoming unpopular. There were no illusions amongst the commanding officers about what was going on. Many of them had been cadets themselves, in fact the vast majority. There were two methods when a case was too obvious to be overlooked. The captain of my company used to put offenders under arrest, make an official report and have them expelled from the corps, which meant that they never could become officers. The other company was led by a guardsman who practised another method. He told the cadets in question that there was no other official course open to him but to report the matter. But should they prefer the unofficial way of having twenty-five with his riding whip, he would not send in a report. There was never a case of a cadet who wanted his career ruined and everybody was happy and content. The captain was held in high esteem with the commander because there was never a report of 'one of these awful cases' in his company.

In spite of the fact that every female being was banned from the House, and the inevitable kitchen-maids were carefully selected so as to offer no allurements whatever, I managed to fall head over heels in love with a little girl outside and therefore had not much bother about the problem that gave the others so much trouble. The affair lasted for the whole of the three years I spent in the Corps. It was very childish and very beautiful and I cannot stand people who grin over their first love.

It was extremely difficult to see the girl at all. There was literally not a single second during the whole day when we were not under supervision. There was not one single door in the whole of the house which you could lock and you couldn't be alone with yourself for a minute. It was perhaps the thing I disliked most. Two hundred cadets in the dining-room, a hundred in the dormitory, thirty in a classroom, ten in a living-quarter. Some people just can't stand that, and get the *cafard*. If you want to leave your room,



stand to attention and ask the cadet-sergeant: 'I beg your permission to go to room number . . .' or wherever you want to go. If you get your permission, you go and ask there whether you are allowed to enter the room, and when you leave, you report that you are leaving now. Every time. At any time. All day long. There were three Classes of Behaviour. When you join the corps, you are in the Third. You might get promoted into the Second. The First exists only in theory. Only a cadet in the Second Class might sometimes go for a walk in town for a couple of hours and then only at week-ends. Leave is only given to visit parents or 'elderly married relatives or friends of the family' if they send you a written invitation and sign a form stating exactly to the minute what time you arrived and left. Week-end leave out of town has to be asked for long beforehand and it is by no means always granted. If you are on holiday, you have to report immediately to the nearest garrison commander. Only under certain circumstances, you are given a special permit to dress in mufti, and only in the country. As far as I remember, riding and shooting were the only excuses possible.

Our main, in fact our only, idea of a good holiday was to have at least once in a while enough to eat. It seems to have been part of the educational principles to starve us and I think whatever the idea was, it was foolish with children between the age of ten and seventeen. The most frequent punishment for minor offences was to be deprived of lunch or supper. Still, it always had been so and so there was no use complaining. Everybody outside the corps just laughed and quoted the old rhyme:

Cadet, cadet feeds on tripe  
Scarlet collar, golden stripe . . .

We were not allowed to receive parcels from home. They certainly would have contained food in spite of the tradition of starving. During the war, when the little we got was very bad quality into the bargain, there was on two occasions a

revolt in the dining-room. The first time the cadets refused to leave unless some more of the thin potato-soup were served. After much shouting and commanding and threatening to cancel the whole of the Christmas vacation, which proved useless, the officer yielded and we got some more. The next time, when a poisonous-smelling hash was served, nobody touched it and when we were offered bread and butter instead, the butter was rancid. A general bombardment, with the small squares as projectiles, began in the direction of the officers' table. The officers had their own mess, and I had the opportunity later to see what their food was like. Only the officer of the day shared our meals.

One night a cadet fainted in the dining-room. But it was not from under-nourishment that he suddenly fell under the table. A lieutenant went to help and opened his tunic. The boy's chest was covered with a primitive dressing soaked with blood. The lieutenant, being an ex-cadet himself, knew what the matter was and acted discreetly. Without much ado the boy went to the house-hospital to be properly dressed and was dismissed from military duties without asking for a few days. It happened on rare occasions that cadets would fight a strange kind of duel which was a secret tradition. You covered the blade of a knife by winding a leather strap round it until only about one inch protruded. Then, holding their knives dagger-fashioned the fighters grasped each other's right wrists with their left hands and tried to stab each other. They had to stop when one lost his grip. Once two officers fought in this style after a quarrel. They were both ex-cadets and the whole affair would have been very bad indeed if ever it had become known.

The only thing I really liked in the Corps was that here we had some sports and games. We had a boat-race on the river every year and I helped to keep up the unbroken tradition of my company. Besides we had football, tennis and athletics, and though I never liked the German apparatus gymnastics, I loved and practised successfully the

hundred metres and javelin-throwing. Apart from classes and games we underwent an intense O.T.C. training. In June 1914 I went on leave for the first time.

I did not tell my father how much I hated being in the Corps. It would not have been any use as he certainly knew all about it already and it would have spoiled the holiday. Besides, the Corps was far away now, and all that was left of it was the smart guardsman's uniform. I was very proud of it and so was my father. We had a trip on the Rhine together and found much pleasure in most solemnly talking army.

Strangely enough, I hardly remember anything of the events leading up to the outbreak of the war. There had been the murder of the Austrian Crown Prince, and my father had said something about hoping it would not mean war. But the subject was not talked about either on the estate or on the trip. I don't know why. My cousin had his holiday from school at the same time, and we rollicked as we had always done before.

One afternoon we had been in the forest and went back through the village. In front of every cottage there stood women weeping. We did not dare ask what it meant; we knew it was the war. It would have been quite natural for us to be enthusiastic. But we did not say a word. These country women with their wooden faces, prematurely aged, who used never to show any feelings. And now they were standing at their fences, weeping without embarrassment.

Before us down the avenue of poplars went the village crier. He rang the bell in the courtyard and sang out the order of mobilization. My uncle, my father and I had already had telegrams instructing us to join our units and for the first time I felt something like pride and enthusiasm. Because my cousin was only a blinking civilian and I had my order like a grown-up soldier. I was fourteen.

We packed and went to town immediately to take trains in different directions. The townspeople were frantic with

enthusiasm for the war. The first foreigners had already been rounded up and put into a deserted restaurant at the wayside where we passed. They peeped through broken windows and shouted unintelligible words. A Landsturman, hastily got up in a postman's uniform, was sentry at the station. My cousin, a schoolboy of fifteen, was soon on the same kind of duty. For about a week he had to watch the village water-reservoir, since the general belief was that the Russians were about to poison the wells. The railway time-table was topsy-turvy; singing, shouting soldiers everywhere, flowers and brass bands at the stations. Until I arrived at the Corps I had almost forgotten all about the weeping women.

Nothing had changed in the Corps' daily routine. A few of us were commanded to help with the harvest in the place of the men who went to the colours. That was all.

## CHAPTER IV

The faculty of choice atrophies in service life.

T. E. LAWRENCE

WITH surprising rapidity the war became as unreal as all the other wars we had to learn about in history lessons. Most of us were not even interested in it from a professional point of view. It seems unbelievable how indeterminate all our ideas were about what was going on. The Battle of Tannenberg, 1914, Hindenberg liberates East-Prussia. Just another historical date for generations of cadets to be bothered with. 100,000 Russian prisoners. That certainly was worth a half-holiday, but the burning question was, would 15,000 captured Frenchmen be priced as high? Liège, Namur occupied, smashing victories every day. Are we at war with Belgium too? Of course we are, the whole world is against us, the more enemies the more honour. On many trains carrying troops you could see the inscription chalked: 'Declarations of war accepted here daily 10-12 a.m.' A good joke. But what does all this mean? Silly question, that is a matter for politicians, and they are loathsome bores, civilians. The whole world just hates us and therefore we are going to smash it. Our armies are advancing continuously. Our armies — they are little flags on a map, put there according to the daily bulletin from G.H.Q. The bulletin is read to you after the roll-call, and then you get your letters.

Every letter had to be opened and shown to the captain who either glanced at it or read it through. Sometimes a letter was confiscated. This measure had nothing to do with the war, it had always been the routine. Outgoing letters had to be given to the commanding lieutenant to be censored,

even if addressed to your parents. The officer either stamped and posted them or not. Any criticism about the food for instance was a reason for confiscation and in case of repetition had serious consequences. You were only allowed to exchange letters with your parents and near relatives. Exceptions might be granted on application if backed by parents or guardians. Newspapers were banned, but even if they had not been, no cadet would have read them. It was not stylish to be interested in anything outside the Corps.

After a few months the bulletin ceased to be read out on the parade-ground and the maps vanished. Only from time to time we learned about another smashing victory having taken place somewhere, together with the announcement that it was regarded as being worth a half-holiday. The majority, being in the Third Class of Conduct, did not exactly know what to do with the spare time. There was forty-five minutes' recreation every day, that was quite enough. The Second Class could go for a walk, but as we were not allowed to have more than five marks a month to pay for stamps, pencils, notebooks and so on, it was hardly possible to have a cup of coffee somewhere. Paying visits to other rooms was not only complicated by the ceremonial to be observed, but in a way suspect. If you belong to room 10, what business have you always to hang about room 6? Some cadets were reading books. In the narrow regulation wardrobes there was one shelf reserved for them. It took about eight or ten volumes. Every book had to be shown to the lieutenant and signed by him or else confiscated. I wonder what was wrong with Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*? We were not yet at war with England when it was taken away from my box. Kipling was to follow only after he had spoken his mind, but as a matter of course and without my being told the reason. Dumas was obviously too long dead to be regarded as an enemy author, his *Travels in Spain* were signed without hesitation, and so was Shakespeare. The Youth Movement's collection of

German folk-songs, *Der Zupfgeigenhans'l*, was banned for immorality and for the general subversive tendency of the Wandervogel. There was only one kind of book really liked by the censors, the trashy, semi-patriotic stuff which has always been produced by the ton in Germany. It was bound to add to the general atmosphere of pseudo-idealistic unreality, where black is black and white is white and never the twain shall meet, and where wars are colourful hunting or shooting parties in fairyland. This always reminds me of the ancient Teutonic conception of Heaven: after a good breakfast with plenty of beer you go to battle, heads and limbs are flying about and after the general massacre charming young Valkyries put the bodies nicely together again, to be back in time for lunch with more beer. It seems that from the very beginning the Germans have always wanted to eat their cake and have it. The same psychology later on led to the pogroms. You pick out a group of utterly defenceless people, call them enemies and tell yourself for so long that they are powerful and dangerous that you are able to believe it. Then you smash the powerful enemy of your dreams and celebrate a great victory. A fool-proof scheme without danger and satisfying — if you are built that way.

It was not as easy as that in the war and the Germans had to learn their lesson by facing stark naked facts. Only they forgot all about it, even more quickly than they had learned, that insisting upon dreams carries you to a very definite point in reality, but not very far from the point you started from. Perhaps the most tragic example was the famous charge of the young volunteer regiments at Langemarck in Flanders. Without the necessary support or preparation by artillery, some infantry regiments composed entirely of very young volunteers, schoolboys and students, were hurled against the British trenches. They attacked singing *Deutschland über alles* and were inevitably slaughtered by the thousand. The charge was from a tactical or strategical

point of view utterly senseless and had no practical result. And it was not a desperate resolution to die as in the suicide-charge of the Balinese warriors against the Dutch troops, for the Balinese had no hope of resisting. It was just what is called German Idealism, the belief that reality will give way when you close your eyes to it. Sometimes it might be the only way to get through something; then close your eyes and run forward. But only after you know exactly where you stand and where you are going. In other words, the situation at times calls for a stiff whisky. But I should not advocate habitual and continuous intoxication.

I dare say it was a system to keep us out of reality. All went tolerably well as long as a boy, educated in the Cadet Corps, did not leave the beaten track. His world easily passed over into the world of the officers' mess. But if he found himself one day in some state which was not the artificial hothouse he was used to live in, he invariably became a complete failure. Old Marshal Hindenburg was such a product of the Cadet Corps. He used to say proudly that he had never read a book save the Bible and military textbooks. Thrown into the cunning world of diplomatists and party-leaders, he was bound to be misused. He tried hard to reconcile the terms he was accustomed to think in with actual happenings. An impossible task, producing the pitiable picture of a man, venerable by reason of old age, of a military glory which was denied him by his own brother in arms, Ludendorff, and of personal honesty, who had no idea what was actually happening.

Less far-reaching in their consequences but more frequent were the numerous cases of young officers who later had to put up with a civil profession. Only very few could find their way in a world which was alien to them. From the beginning they took it for granted that not much honesty was to be found outside their own circles. They expected 'shop-keepers' morals', which was a term of abuse. What they found were morals and customs different from those which could



be obtained only in their artificial world. It had been a privilege to live in that earthly paradise. So many of the fallen angels insisted on becoming the very unpleasant type of man who believes that his having belonged to a crack regiment is a good substitute for or even better than professional qualifications. The head of an architectural bureau once said to me: 'They all seem to believe, and some even tell me, that it is an honour for my studio to have them there. But I happen to need a designer for country houses and not an expert gunner. And if you tell them so, you are called unpatriotic. I cannot afford a second man to do the actual work.' I could not blame either of the parties. The architect's point of view is clear and I knew the kind of education which led the young men in question to theirs.

Of course there was another type who found what they expected in the world of shopkeepers and other blinking civilians. If you are prejudiced enough you always find what you are looking for, and very many people think that different morals means no morals at all. So once outside the Code of Honour they felt themselves to be pressed members of that despised lawless class which cannot be honourably challenged, and they acted accordingly.

The same attitude was to be found in cases where a certain amount of intercourse with other classes was inevitable. A man who would never have dreamt of doing anything dishonest within his own circle certainly found himself justified in cheating a horse-dealer, the excuse being, 'You can't expect such a fellow to have any sense of honour. If you don't cheat him he will cheat you'. Without much surprise I later learned the other side of the story from a horse-dealer. 'You see, gentlemen don't think it dishonest to cheat us. So if you are not very tough you lose your last shirt...' The man who said that was certainly honest and never cheated me. And I hope I am a gentleman. Once I was fool enough to tell this story to a major in a very friendly

private conversation. He was simply horrified. Not about the cheating, but to think that a gentleman could speak in the way I did to a horse-dealer. I mentioned that the horse-dealer had done all the speaking, only to learn that being on such friendly terms with him made it doubtful whether I knew my place as a gentleman. Well, life is sometimes complicated. It is bound to be dangerously complicated if you think that honesty is the private property of your own class.

There is scarcely a doubt that it was the same spirit which animated the cadet's attitude towards teachers and officers. The unwritten law said: Always tell the truth to an officer whatever unpleasantness may come of it. But to cheat a civilian teacher was almost a point of honour. They had no power to inflict any disciplinary punishment on us; all they could do was to report the guilty cadet to his superior officer who ordered punishment if he thought fit. The poor professors were used to being maltreated and one of them invented a peculiar form of revenge. He used to suffer anything and did not say a word if a cadet had not made the least preparation for his lesson. But once a week he went into the class-room with the announcement, 'To-day I am going to report six of you. Any volunteers?' He picked his victims with magnificent impartiality, guilty or not, every single one had his turn. We were quite content with this regulation, understanding that the poor civilian had at least to do something to show the captain that there was discipline in his form.

The Latin teacher was a Pan-German. Since the war had broken out we did not hear much about the proper subject of his lessons, because he thought it far more necessary to acquaint us with the works of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and similar writers. When the notorious Vaterlandspartei was founded he became one of its most enthusiastic members, displaying maps where a quarter of France, the whole of Belgium and Switzerland and the greater part of European

Russia were already painted in the colour of the Reich. He was the only teacher in the Corps I heard about later. When Hitler was in power, I happened to meet an officer teaching at a military school for N.C.O.'s. He told me, that in spite of all endeavours, there were still traitors in the ranks. For instance one of the teachers at his very school. Would you believe it, they had just found out that the man in question had been a Freemason? Of course, his having had the audacity to swindle himself into the position of military teacher would have very serious consequences for him. And the man had been at the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, too. Well, I found out that the traitor was the man who had preached the gospel of Greater Germany to me twenty years earlier. It was not so very astonishing after all. A German periodical once printed a photograph of the insignia of a war-time foundation at the eastern front, the Freemasons' Lodge Iron Cross. All the paper wanted to show was, according to the text with the picture, that 'the Jewish Freemason scum' had dared to have the audacity to include the Iron Cross in their insignia. At that time it was difficult to get an ordinary ash-tray in Germany without that cross on it. If state ideology is teaching that Jews, Freemasons, Catholics, Hussites and Communists are identical after all and form a common plot to destroy Germany, my Pan-German teacher belongs in a concentration camp. If that is not logic . . .

The upper partition of a cadet's regulation wardrobe, about sixteen inches square, was reserved for decorative purposes. It was the substitute for a home in this world, resembling a jail more than anything else on earth. Here we put photographs of our parents and other pictures, medals and officers' shoulder straps which used to belong to our fathers or to other family heroes. The main feature of my collection was a tin soldier and it is the only object which has accompanied me ever since the days of my early boyhood. Collecting the flat model soldiers was very popular with German boys and there were many varieties for sale. You could

buy almost any famous battle in a box, and so we had come across the Battle of Waterloo and found my great-grandfather as a tin-soldier. He was Hugh Halkett, a Scotsman who as a colonel had been in command of the 3rd Hanoverian Brigade at Waterloo. In breaking through a square of the Old Guard he personally captured General Cambonne. We had a contemporary etching at home showing him on horseback and dragging the French officer by his aiguillettes. The model soldier was obviously made after that etching. I was always said to be very much like him in appearance and was proud of it. He was my hero and when I placed the soldier in the cadet's wardrobe I had proudly told the story. When Britain declared war, one of the cadets asked me to take 'the enemy officer' away. Naturally I refused, and he said something about 'treacherous English blood' in me. So I told him briefly and in military language that it was Scottish and the best kind of blood a man could possibly have, and would he kindly stop talking rot about the English. They were gentlemen and certainly would not insult other people's grandfathers. We had a most glorious fight and in a way he won, because I lost a front tooth and he gained two days off duty in hospital. But I think he did not enjoy it too much. The outburst was perhaps not so much due to a mystic Voice of the Blood but to the fact that at home all the really good things used to come from England: biscuits in large square tins, tea and puffed rice as well as the inherited Queen Anne furniture which I loved. In general, English seemed to be a synonym for quality. Whether it was horses and harness or textiles or marmalade, the cut of your clothes or your manners, if it was not genuine the best you could say about it was 'nearly as good as English'. To think and to behave like a gentleman — with the English word being used — was the undisputed ideal. And it was so not only in ours but in many aristocratic families, especially if there had been a British woman even generations ago.

After the roll-call, one day early in June 1916, the captain read the news of Lord Kitchener's death. According to this first report it was due to an accident though later I came to read two different official versions of how this great soldier met his end either through a German submarine or through an act of sabotage on the part of a spy. The cadets cheered, but the captain cut them short. 'There is no reason to rejoice', he said, 'at the tragic end of a gallant soldier by accident. It might be fortunate for us to be rid of a dangerous enemy but we would have wished the man of Khartum to be killed in honest open battle.' The captain certainly behaved as a gentleman should do. But the majority of the cadets did not agree. An enemy War Minister was worth at least a half-holiday, so they said, and they said it rather openly. Some of the younger lieutenants supported them and brought the matter before the colonel. The commander gave a diplomatic decision and granted the holiday 'on account of the great heat', as the order put it.

As a rule we did not see much of the colonel. He only appeared on state occasions, such as when the King of Saxony came to have a look at his Prussian competitors. When the royal guest was announced a few days before the visit, we were solemnly warned: 'Don't you dare grin when His Majesty speaks to you.' The reason was that the King was known to cultivate deliberately the Saxon dialect. And that dialect was a sure bet with the comic music-hall artists. Its intonation gives you the impression of an insulted person complaining.

Shortly after that visit I had the first experience of real agony. As I found it easy to write German essays, I used to supply at least two or three of my closer friends with such. The charming old gentleman who taught us German was the only teacher I really liked. Since he liked me as well, he never said a word though he knew perfectly well where my friends purchased their essays. Only in one case did he think it necessary to teach me a lesson. I was bold enough

to complain because he had given me a mark which was not good enough in my opinion and got the reply: 'Your essay is excellent. The mark I have given you is the carefully calculated average of the marks of the three essays you have written this time. You should have been fairer to your customers, and either given them equally good work or kept your own work on the same level.' I lost my temper, I am sorry to say, instead of grinning, and called him unjust. 'You can have justice, of course,' he said, and reported me to the captain. In due course I was put under arrest. Like all the rooms in the house the room was lit by gas, the lamp hanging high up from the ceiling. As I had nothing better to do I tried to reach the lamp in a high jump and succeeded. The lamp gave way and gas escaped. The only window was closed with a key and barred so that I could not even break the glass; it was high up in the wall, too. So like a fool I completely lost my head, banging against the door and shouting. Nobody heard me as everybody was in the dining-room and I got really frightened. Lying on the floor I went on shouting and meanwhile the smell became threatening. The cadet-orderly-sergeant at last came to set me free. All he said was: 'Why didn't you ring the bell, you blasted idiot?' There was one at the door. With the help of one of the servants we fixed the lamp, not to let the officers know. It was quite a useful experience, I think. Nowadays the young men who want a commission in the army have to undergo carefully staged accidents of a similar kind as tests for their ability. I am glad that system was not yet invented when I made a fool of myself in the detention-cell.

If this time I felt nothing more than the death-agony, it was only a few months later that I had the whole experience of dying.

Epidemics were not infrequent in the Corps. In fact we had one in each of the three years I spent in it. This time it was diphtheria and I got it very badly indeed. After a few days in hospital, the military doctor found suspicious red

spots on my chest and diagnosed scarlet fever as well. I told him it was impossible, as I had had it twice already and according to the rules you get it only once. He believed me only when I furnished him with the address of the doctor who had treated me and after he had corresponded with him. But scarlet fever it was. My mother, who at that time was a Red Cross nurse in an army hospital, was hastily summoned. She found me and two other cases in an isolated room, trying to swallow thick slices of soldiers' brown bread which were supposed to be our supper. It was impossible but we were hungry. So my mother donned all her medals — she had a few already — and went to see the colonel about it. The colonel was, as can be reasonably assumed, not too pleased to see a lady poking her nose into his business, but if there was anything Scottish in my mother, it was the gift to get what she wanted once she had made up her mind. The interview ended with a glorious victory on her side. She succeeded in being officially transferred to our hospital by telegram and took over at once. Her food was sent over from the officers' mess and she easily managed to support us with her portions as well. It was a kind of food which even diphtheria throats were able to swallow.

She had been summoned because in the opinion of the doctor there was as good as no hope for me to survive the double attack. One night the fever had mounted to over 40 Centigrade and I had got out of bed, in an unconscious state, and walked down the stairs and into the yard. There a nurse had found me and carried me back. I didn't know about it naturally, but the two other fellows told me how ridiculous it had looked, as I am rather tall and the nurse was short and plump. I awoke in bed from a subcutaneous needle being thrust into my chest. There was some blood on my bed, and through a wall of cotton-wool I heard the doctor's voice: 'Just give him another one. Can't do much damage. Chap's dying anyway.' In my weakness I tried to protest but was unable to speak or to move. And then a

strange feeling came. A great feeling of contentment. Rest. Nothing mattered any more. So this was death.

When I awoke the next morning, feeling rather well, I told the doctor that I had heard him. He was very much embarrassed, and my room-mates told me that when I had fallen back, the doctor had said, 'Well, it's all over.'

After I was more or less all right again, I went on special leave for some weeks and had plenty of time to think; a pleasure for which there was not much opportunity in the Corps. The war was going on meanwhile, and as it had lasted so surprisingly long the question arose whether it might even last long enough for me to join it. I wanted to go to the front, like the rest of us. But even the cadets who were older than the youngest volunteers were not allowed to go. They were supposed to be spared for peace-time when subalterns would certainly be getting scarce. But what if, as we used to put it, peace broke out before we had seen what after all was our proper job? This was the general feeling amongst the older cadets; but apart from the fact that I shared this feeling, I had another reason for making up my mind to go to the front line at all costs.

We were supposed to be soldiers in the King's service and our military duty was taken very seriously, though the youngest of us were only ten years old. Anyway, the subalterns in Frederick the Great's army had been years younger than I was now. But I could not help looking at the military display of the Corps as a game for children. There was nothing professional about it, in spite of the infantry drill and the regular officers. Seen through the eyes of a cadet the profession of an officer had nothing to do with work and craftsmanship. It was a social rank and nothing much else. When the commoners amongst us spoke like that, I could see their point and understand that their ambitions to get the title *Hochwohlgeboren* might somewhat overshadow the other aspects of the business. But it was the same with the titled boys who had no such excuse.



Everyone who showed the least interest in the business of soldiering proper was suspected as a place-hunter and called a Theoretician. The Practical, Real Soldier did not care tuppence for the Why and the How but drilled his recruits just well enough to please the inspecting superior. 'A soldier does not think' was the most quoted motto. So far I thought that all this existed in the Corps only and I could not make myself believe that it was the same throughout the army. I was certain that outside the Corps, serving the King was not exclusively a solemn children's game, and an officers' mess not merely a merry social-climbing party. And I wanted badly to find some real ground to stand upon.

There were always rumours in the Corps about cadets who had succeeded in deserting to the front. Nobody had a clear idea how it could be done, but obviously you needed an officer-friend to receive you at the other end. When one of the cadets had a visitor from the front, a brother or some other relative, we always tried to ask him whether he could put us up with his regiment. Actually a friend of mine found a young lieutenant ready to do it, and asked me to help him with a plan he had developed. He and another cadet managed to get leave over the week-end to Weimar. Our house there had been locked up since the outbreak of the war and I could get them plain clothes from there, if I could be on leave at the same time. I promised to do it on the understanding that they would take me with them, but they refused. The lieutenant had anyway promised to receive one 'deserter' only; three would certainly spoil the whole attempt. I gave in but made my own plan.

Difficult as it was, we got our leave and all went well in the beginning. My friends, looking strange in their ill-fitting civilian dress, went to the station. They had succeeded in getting some money, which had been a major problem. We were allowed only five marks a month from home and as

privates we got a seventy-five-pfennig monthly Royal Allowance. For me the problem of how to pay my fare was still ahead. After seeing my friends off I called on a friend of the family and tried to raise a loan. In my opinion, the story I invented was very convincing, but it was not so in his. Well, the whole scheme ended very ingloriously. I was trapped into contradicting myself, I confessed the real purpose and was given the alternative of a telephone call to the garrison commander or accepting the promise of the friend to intervene with my father on my behalf. I did not mind what way I got into active service and like a good boy I went back to the Corps on Sunday night. As soon as we were in bed and trying in regulation position to 'fall asleep immediately', two civilians entered the sleeping-room and taking off their hats reported 'Two cadets back from leave'. The officer on duty was disconcerted to such an extent that he only said, 'Thank you. Go to bed'. My two friends had been found out by the military commander of the station and sent back under escort to the gates of the Corps. They were not punished for overstaying leave and wearing plain clothes, and a short time later the three of us succeeded in being allowed to resign from the Corps. It meant that we would not be promoted as long as the good boys who stayed behind were not, but we certainly did not care.

I joined an infantry regiment, officially as a private-volunteer, but as everybody knew me to be a cadet, I was unofficially regarded as such and took my meals in the officers' mess. Now the Real Thing would begin. This would be life in earnest.

First I learned that the training in the Cadet Corps had been far more thorough than what active soldiers had to learn during war-time. It would have been quite easy to fulfil my duties had it not been for another part of the training which was perhaps the most strenuous experience I ever had. It began with the traditional introduction which every young man had to undergo in the mess. He was systemati-

cally brought into a state which can only be described as the utmost limit of drunkenness. The idea was that in such a state you can find out what kind of a fellow he is. There is some truth in it. But it might perhaps not have been necessary to continue with the treatment for weeks and months to follow. I spent four months with the battalion and I am certain that I was sober for at the most four days. You get used to it and it does not interfere very much with your occupation after the first weeks. The cadet officers with private or N.C.O. rank were called *Fahnenjunker*. Being the youngest people in the mess they had not much part in the conversation. It was not quite up to the dignity of elder officers to speak to them at table, but somehow they had to show their interest in the youngsters. So they used to send an orderly round who told you, 'Captain X desires to drink with you, sir'. Then you stood up, raising your glass and draining it. You had to drain it and the captain took a sip. There were about a dozen older officers showing their interest in you at every meal. After supper we usually had lectures on military subjects in the mess and afterwards the real drinking started and seldom ended before three or four in the morning. Our duty began at five or six.

Not that I did not enjoy myself. But I can easily think of more adequate methods for training soldiers, and it was rather a strain.

When I was sent into action for the first time, it was tremendously different from what I had thought it would be. Our company fell in as usual in the yard, but there was nothing to be seen of the other one. At the entrance of their quarters stood a sentry, which was most extraordinary. Some of the N.C.O.'s were missing but all the officers were assembled in full field-kit. The major approached and read an order. There was a revolt in town, the public buildings and some other houses had to be occupied. It was the early summer of 1917.

I was given charge of a draft to watch the town slaughter-

house. The order was to prevent looting, if necessary with the bayonet, but to avoid shooting if possible. The task was easy enough, as the slaughter-house possessed high surrounding walls and heavy iron doors which I had closed. Outside everything seemed to be quiet. But then a telephone call came through from a baker's shop round the corner, which was threatened by a crowd. I took eight men, all of them young recruits like the rest, and went to have a look. The baker, a tall fat man, was having a fight with perhaps two score shouting and abusive women who were trying to force their way into the shop. As a matter of fact, I had not the faintest idea what to do. I had never before seen a riot. How do you address a crowd to make them go home? There must be a kind of official formula. Anyway something had to be done. I left my men in extended order a hundred yards behind and went nearer. When they saw me the better part of the crowd turned round. The baker cried, 'Help'. Before I could make up my mind what to say, an elderly woman rushed at me, shouting: 'You go home. We want bread. Clear out or we'll tear you to pieces.' It was very embarrassing to see a woman in such a state. After all I was just seventeen and had never seen anything like it. As firmly as possible I told her that she was the one to go home, as I had orders to see to that. She turned to the crowd, 'Nobody goes'. And then to me, 'Murderer'. A stone came through the air but missed me. I gave the command to fix bayonets, and heard the rattling sound behind my back. The woman went on shouting, 'Murderer', and more stones came. I dropped the official attitude completely; all of this was too silly and just annoying. 'Look here,' I said, 'I'm not a murderer, and you know it. You leave that poor fat chap alone and I'll leave you alone and we'll all stop making fools of ourselves. Damn it, run along, I don't want to beat a woman.' She stared and said: 'It's a misery, this war. After all, you should be at school, boy. No hard feelings.' Off she went and the

majority followed. I beckoned my men to advance and the rest of the women ran before they were nearer than a dozen yards. I told the baker it would be better to take the loaves out of his window, which was splintered but not broken, and went back to the slaughter-house.

At lunch-time I was summoned to the mess to report and there I learned that a cadet-officer had been wounded defending a department-store with his sword and that a captain reading the declaration of martial law had been dragged from his horse, smeared with butter and powdered with flour.

Our garrison town was another of the tiny princely residences and quite a number of court-officials and wealthy businessmen had asked for personal protection. So at night I marched off, this time to defend the earl-marshal's house. Curfew was at ten p.m. and we had orders to challenge three times anybody walking past after that hour, and, if he did not stand, to shoot. About midnight I found myself at the corner of the garden with a loaded gun and I found myself in the embarrassing situation of seeing a man with a suitcase quietly walking on after I had shouted 'Halt. Who goes there?' three times. Again an unofficial attitude saved the situation. Rather excited by the prospect of having to shoot the man, I cried: 'You damned idiot, can't you halt? This is business. Don't you know I'll have to shoot?' The man slowly turned round and answered that he had thought it was some silly hoax. 'Halt. Who goes there,' he grumbled. 'Like in a story book.' After my experience in the morning I could see his point. He was perfectly harmless and just coming from a village to see some relatives in town. One of the soldiers saw him safely home.

The first and only shot fired came from the same corner where I had been. A zealous lance-corporal from the N.C.O. School correctly challenged a noise in the garden and when he saw something approaching, he fired. Fortunately he did not hit his target, but he gave the old and

stone-deaf night-watchman the shock of his life. The riots ended after a few days without much damage having been done. Only later I learned why a whole company and a number of N.C.O.'s had vanished and why certain doors at the barracks had been watched. The company was formed of Alsatian recruits who were not considered reliable. After the revolt they went on as if nothing had happened, and nobody talked about the interlude.

I felt anything but happy during that time. The Real Thing was a terrible disappointment. Not that I expected the gay and irresponsible army life that one reads of in military novels. I knew better already and it was rather the reverse I was looking for. The trade, the craftsmanship of the soldier. But all we did was done in the same spirit as in the corps. Outward appearance seemed to be the most important thing. I don't mean the brushing and polishing, that I could see was necessary, and not the goose-step which has its advantages as well. But why was the regulation about the exact position in which a man had to shoot, more than a piece of useful general advice, to be modified according to personal natural tendency and experience? I had some difficulty in keeping the standard at the rifle range, but when I participated *hors concours* at the N.C.O.s' competition where nobody asked me to lie down according to regulations, I easily scored the highest number of points. Then there were the lessons. All about the Rifle or Bodily Cleanliness or Distinctions of Rank. It was certainly necessary to teach us all these things but the lessons had obviously one aim only — to get quick answers keeping as closely as possible to the very words of the book. The gospel all the officers and N.C.O.'s continually preached was: 'Answer quickly — in a loud voice — anything. It does not matter whether it is right or wrong. A soldierly attitude is The Thing.' They would have been right if this had been an attempt to teach the boys only not to hesitate and delay when asked questions. But it became a purpose in itself,

and there was very little understanding of the proper subject of the lessons. None of the training personnel was in the least interested in the job as such; the all-important question was: will the inspecting superior officer find out how little the men in fact know or will he leave deeply impressed by their Soldierly Attitude?

When in the line the same men proved to be extremely good and skilled soldiers, this was due to nothing other than the fact that the Germans as a whole are somewhat gifted with adaptability and that the greater part of the soldiers were labourers, accustomed to finding out for themselves the most practical way of doing the job on hand. Once I met a typical victim of the usual kind of training in Houthoult Forest in Flanders. He was a young lieutenant who had passed through the O.T.C. and all the rest, then been sent to a quiet spot on the eastern front to be made a lieutenant. When transferred to our regiment, he was supposed to know at least enough to get his men into the line. He was a decent young chap with a sense of responsibility and therefore left the job to an elder sergeant. Then he left the concrete shelter to his men and came to sit with me in a wooden cabin nearby, cursing the training at home which left him absolutely helpless when faced with actual facts. He at least was intelligent enough to realize that conditions in Houthoult Forest were different from the ones in the nice model trenches of Döberitz or the peaceful spot in Russia where he had been. We sometimes had people who did not see as much and expected to manage according to rules. A few weeks later he was a splendid company commander, but the home-training cannot be accused of that.

When I came across these things in the garrison I had the advantage of my experiences in the Cadet Corps. It made me feel uneasy to waste so much perfectly good time and to pretend that it was all very serious and important. But obviously it could not be helped and the only thing to do was to make the best of it. Pretend you are a good soldier

by shouting at the top of your voice, memorizing every word of the instruction-books and clicking your heels smartly. You are on the safe side and you are at liberty to think whatever you like as long as you don't talk. The product of these reflections was called Good Soldierly Attitude but I think it was not very good soldierly morals.



## CHAPTER V

Getroffen war's und sterbend lag es da,  
Das man vorher noch munter hüpfen sah.  
Er nahm die Büchse, schlug sie an ein' Baum  
Und sprach: 'Das Leben is ja nur ein Traum'.

*Das Rehleim*

I WENT to join my regiment in Flanders all by myself, and as for obvious reasons I had not been told where it exactly was, I had to look for it. The first sign-post was some military authority in, I think, Courtrai. Presenting my marching orders to a friendly sergeant, I asked, grinning: 'Well, where is the war?' He, grinning too, looked at me and said: 'I see, you are a volunteer. Listen, son, we've lost this blooming war and we're not so keen on finding it again. And now you totter along and want to look for it!' This was in the beginning of autumn 1917.

Disturbed and puzzled, I went out into the street. Heavy army-lorries thundered over the uneven paving-stones towards an unknown destination. A tall man came out of a house and lounged along in front of me. He was wearing slippers with his German military breeches and a dirty brown knitted jacket. His head-dress had probably been a military cap in bygone ages, now it looked more like a dish-cloth and the whole man more like a tramp than anything. The most amusing thing about him was a greasy rope knotted round his neck. I wanted to see what the strange apparition looked like from the front and passed it. The greasy rope turned out to be the black and silver ribbon from which the order *Pour le Mérite* dangled. The stranger was one of the famous airmen, or anyway that was the only explanation possible. He returned my extra-smart salute with a smile and a wave of the hand. Then he stepped into

a gaudily painted small car, not much more than a chassis with a chair on it, and left behind in me the certainty that nothing on earth would be able to surprise me after this experience.

I found my company billeted in Lichtervelde, a small place, and at that time not much damaged, with many civilians and the usual estaminet in every third house. The few days I spent there before going to the actual line are unforgettable. It was somehow like waking up and facing the world of reality for the first time. I liked it. There was the same amount of drill and saluting and all that, but everything seemed to be straight to the point. For the first time I experienced that feeling which no ex-soldier ever forgets — or so I think. The strange and wonderful contentment that makes up for all the hardship and terror: there is nothing to worry about, no problem can touch you, and if there is one — never mind, perhaps tomorrow you will have finished with problems for good. All human relationship has ceased to be complicated, everybody has his place and all are friends, working together. And if there is one you don't like, well he may be dead soon, poor fellow. Nothing matters really and you get your food and drink and tobacco and they tell you where to sleep and what to do and you get money into the bargain.

You did not always feel like that. But I am sure it is what lasts longest in your memory, and it is why in a remote corner of their hearts nearly all men like war. And that has nothing to do with the conscious knowledge that war is something terrible which should be avoided as long as possible.

Discipline at that stage of the war was no longer a thing which could be taken for granted. The more experienced soldier could not help noticing the inconsistency between the system of military regulations and actual practice. The antiquated tactics for the single man and the smaller units had been discarded out of mere necessity and without orders

from above. When, by and by, theory began to conform with practice, it just adopted the experience of the fighting soldier. That is obviously the right thing to do, but it is not sufficient. When our men grew tired, they used to throw away their ammunition, and not seldom their rifles. Overwhelmed by the experience of this Battle of Machines they could not see what earthly use a rifle with its single bullet could be. The only remedy against the continuous loss of weapons and ammunition was an often repeated army order: 'The rifle must again become the main weapon of infantry.' But nobody was going to show how and why. At Christmas 1917 the regiment went to Bruges and on the wide field of St. Croix we were trained in the newest tactics. The idea was to retreat when the enemy started his artillery preparation and let him take the empty trench, and wait until our own artillery had prepared the trench to be retaken and then our troops would go back again. The only units to stay at their posts were the light machine-gun sections, to which I belonged. Our orders were to stay in our positions before the line and to fire, well, as long as possible when the enemy attacked. 'The artillery conquers, the machine-gun defends, the infantry occupies.' Exactly what our men had always felt and why they used to throw away their ammunition first of all.

It was only twenty years later that I came across the first constructive thoughts on this theme, in the most intelligent book ever written about it, *The Future of Infantry*, by Liddell Hart. There are very few books, and I do not mean on military subjects alone, which I have enjoyed as much as this one. It is not often that you find such exact observations as material for such clear thinking combined with an admirable style.

But to continue with the explanation of the discontent and indifference of the troops. On this morning, and on this morning only, we were marched from our billets to St. Croix to be instructed in the new tactics. When we had finished, the brigade-commander ordered a march-past. There was

only one slight difficulty in fulfilling the order. Most of the company and battery commanders had gone home with their men after the performance. Only very few troops were left and nobody would have dared to tell the colonel. But our A.D.C. had a bright idea. The colonel was stationed with his staff at the end of a lane in the wood. And then we did what every stage-director does when he has only a dozen supers. One battery and perhaps two infantry companies marched past and went galloping through the wood behind the general's back to march past again until enough men had passed to represent a brigade. Only a different officer was put at the head of each unit, because the general might have recognized them. It was rather fatiguing but it was very good fun too.

Anyway this military merry-go-round had been the final act of the rehearsal of the new tactics. Perhaps it was more effective, as the colonel at least got what he wanted and so the purpose was fulfilled. The more serious part of the performance would have been staged better by any film director. It was the old story. All the men remembered was that they had been ordered about on a large field while it had been expected of them to imagine trenches, an enemy and what not. When you asked them what it had been all about, they drawled out some rules and regulations about Elastic Defence, but certainly without being able to connect these abstract terms with any kind of reality. I think this kind of training has been nothing but a perpetual curse ever since the time of the Seven Years War, when exercises on the battlefield could be rehearsed like a ballet. It must have had its advantages at one time, as it certainly trained the soldier to perform his duty mechanically and without thinking. And if you are trained to react mechanically you lose your human nature and its weaknesses at the same time. But modern warfare wants rather intelligent and human soldiers and therefore has to put up with all aspects of human character. Theoretically the leading men knew it. Again and again we

were told that from now on the private had to be ready to take responsibility, and nobody quoted the notorious sentence 'A soldier does not think' any more. And if there is one thing more difficult than putting an idea into practice, it is trying to do so against tradition in an army.

What saved the situation usually was the fact that the young officers had not been exposed to that tradition long enough, and developed into useful leaders while doing the actual thing, just like the lieutenant referred to already. Another important factor was that generally the old sergeants took the place of the subalterns. Lieutenants were so scarce that usually they had to act as captains to a company and, in some cases, lead a battalion. It did not make much difference tactically that the company at that time often went into the line only fifty or sixty men strong.

It was not difficult to find out that the cynical joke of the N.C.O. in Courtrai, about the war being lost and that we should rather not find it, reflected the general opinion of the rank and file. But when you, very reasonably, asked 'So what?' the answer was: 'They don't know yet at G.H.Q., they always find out about things half a century late. And we can't just go home in the meantime.' I think it an astonishing testimony to the quality of soldiers that these men were convinced that there was as good as no hope and still performed miracles. They were only annoyed about the shortage of certain materials, and risked their lives to get long rubber-boots or waterproof trench-coats from the British. As rubber was very scarce, we used to put empty sand-bags round our legs as protection against the mud of Flanders.

In a way, I never found the war, though I was supposed to be right in the middle of it. Perhaps that was the most striking lesson and it impressed me more and more deeply with the years. During the war we did not speak much of it except in terms of leading articles. But since then I have heard all sorts of people talking about war. Praising it,

cursing it, analysing it. I cannot help thinking that they are all discussing a thing which does not exist.

Somehow the facts we are used to assembling under the term 'war' seem to disperse against our will. Probably it is the common fate of all terms to become worn out after a certain time. If the same separate facts which give rise to the term go on existing in hard reality we do not notice that in the meantime it has become necessary to distribute and assemble them in a new group, or groups. The legal conception of war, being the most narrow and rigid one, received the first blow. As long as a nation does not declare war, there is none. Therefore from the point of view of the law the war in China is only a nightmare and someone ought for humanity's sake to go and tell the poor people so. And as only a government can declare war, there is, at the time I am writing, no war in Spain. Sorry, there is one the very moment you recognize General Franco as a government, but even then it is only a civil war. It might suit the one or other political purpose to play about with the meaningless term, but that does not make the term alive. It remains as dead as the thousands killed in the wars which are not wars.

But you will say that we know exactly what we mean when we speak of war, legal sophistry apart. I wonder. What for instance happened to Czechoslovakia? It may be difficult to look at what happened there without bias, but apart from certain political questions, we can see these facts: a great power used her military strength to press certain territorial demands. As a result, people got killed, hundreds of thousands lost their homes, thousands were made prisoner and put into camps, and a minor state lost vast strips of territory and eventually her independence. There was very little actual fighting, and most of us will say there was none at all, only because the fighting was done on one side, by troops which in the legal sense were no troops. So, because there was no declaration of war and no third party was involved, the German-Czechoslovakian war has never

existed. Peace was saved. But if I were a Czechoslovakian I should say that if this is peace and peace is the contrary of war — give me war for the rest of my life.

There are still more astonishing consequences of the fact that our conception of war has not changed for about a thousand years. We still talk as if what we call war were an aristocratic feud, with both parties acknowledging a Code of Honour even if it leads to defeat. A duel between medieval knights was an ordeal: 'Receive thy lance; and God defend the right!' And both parties believed in the knightly rules whose inspirer was God himself. And if a fighter did not stick to the rules, well there were always the heralds and marshals to see to that. So it was quite sensible to have regulations forbidding you on your horse to strike an enemy when he was lying on the ground, or to use a poisoned weapon.

But I should like to see a modern war in which both parties willingly submitted to God's judgment, and, moreover, to having an armed umpire. Everybody knows that before yielding, any country would break all the rules and afterwards produce the excuse that its very existence was at stake. If you don't believe that, perhaps you can explain why every single country in the world prepares against enemy air-raids upon the civil population and against gas. You know that harming non-combatants and the use of poison have been outlawed for many decades already.

I am afraid the fact that the word 'war' has become an empty term, affects even the pacifists, or at least some of them. A pacifist, speaking generally, is 'against war'. Well, I would like to know who is not. The Great Alexanders and Fredericks of Prussia who merrily admitted that they went to war for war's and glory's sake are dead. Even Herr Hitler gladly renounces war if he can get what he wants at other people's expense without risking his expensive soldiers, and that in spite of all the teachings in the German schools that war is the most wonderful thing on earth and the

necessary testing ground of virility for a good boy. So there is no need to emphasize the fact that we are against it. But being against war under any circumstances and at all costs means something else, and one should admit honestly that it means giving away anything another fellow takes a fancy to.

A radical pacifist, and a very honest and venerable gentleman indeed, once told me by means of an anecdote why he did not believe that this doctrine was nothing but an encouragement to robbers.

A friend of his, he said, once had a stranger calling at the door, who on the very flimsy excuse that he was selling something or other, obviously wanted to look round for the best way of breaking into the house. The friend examining the situation and believing strongly in the Good in men, told the stranger openly what he thought of him. Then he showed him round, indicating where the silver was kept and how the safe was to be opened. 'If you really don't know better — please yourself. I won't resist you.' The poor burglar, very embarrassed indeed, mumbled out that he had been converted, that he could not for his life burgle a man who had been so friendly, and went off with many apologies and a discreetly offered pound note. Needless to say, he did not come back that night.

I think that the story is by no means as ridiculous as some people might say, and I believe it is literally true. But it proves nothing in our problem. Such a thing can happen only if both parties have the same morality, and only if the would-be burglar believes in his heart of hearts that house-breaking is not a nice thing to do. Only he had some reason to take the risk of having a bad conscience and of being caught. But now imagine a man in the part of the prospective burglar who was taught at school that breaking into houses was a gentleman's sport, and all people who said otherwise were milksops, and it only served them right when they had their things taken away by burglars of resolution. Moreover, if he had been told that taking what he wants is only just



and right, then, I'm afraid, the thing would not work. And that is exactly the situation of the radical pacifist as long as there is a single country left where Fascist morality is preached. I told all this to a Fascist and he answered that the whole world had only to be converted to his creed, and then we would again have the uniformity of morality which in my opinion is necessary to make possible the anecdote. But I am not so keen on trying that experiment after having read about life in Chicago before the Big Clean-up.

Most of these observations could already have been made during the Great War; it is only that things became even more accentuated later. But looking back at it now, it was a frightful mess of wars with or without declaration, desperate attempts to stick to the rules and on the other hand ruthless breaking of all of them, with one-sided declaration of peace a new feature in all the legal entanglement. And from the psychological point of view, from the human point of view, it was a compound of every extreme. You could experience brutality and slaughter, fear and dirt, as well as comradeship and honour and gallantry and the strange, carefree paradise of men.

No, I don't like talking about war. I don't know what it is, and I found it very useful to abolish the term for private thinking purposes. This method fits reality much better, and that is what your thinking should do, if you want to have an idea when the next war will come.

During my time with the Cadet Corps and the training battalion of the regiment I had completely lost touch with the Youth Movement. But now, in France and Flanders, I found the Wandervögel again. They were no longer schoolboys but grown-up men; but they had not changed much. At any large bases, such as Bruges or Lille, you could find a Nest, as the meeting-rooms were called, where the old songs were heard and the old arguments about Freedom of Responsibility. Being young and enthusiastic still seemed to be the only programme agreed upon, and the undisputed

basic rule was still to look at any stranger who 'somehow belonged to it' as a friend and brother.

The latter device of course found fertile soil in the general fellowship of soldiers, but it went further. In spite of all the mutual assistance, trust and friendship in the trenches there was still a private corner in everyone's soul, that part of the civilian personality that remained. As long as it was hidden in the field-grey uniform, all the men were *Kameraden*, but I have seen a hundred times how ex-private X and ex-corporal Y met after the war. In the case of a formal meeting of the old regiment, they just become soldiers again for a couple of hours, with the old songs, the old jokes, 'Remember that filthy corner at Poelcapelle?' and the old spirit. And as a rule it is the same for a while when you happen to run into some stranger who has been in the same boat. It does not matter on which side of no-man's-land you each have been, you have been playing the same game together, gone through the same pleasant and unpleasant experiences, and if you happen to have been enemies it is certainly a good reason to have a drink together to express your gratitude for the fact that you did not kill each other. But then you might or you might not find out whether you have more things in common and you either part cheerfully or you meet again. But this is an altogether civilian matter to decide. Private X becomes Mr. X again, a collector of stamps and manager in a tea-firm, and corporal Y a rugger-fan and van-driver.

The Spirit of the Front, later so often invoked in Germany, was a concern of the front only; and that might be a truism to most people. Especially as all the soldiers — during the war the greater part of the officers included — were not professionals, they never all lost their private personality. Only we were determined not to speak too much about it. When everything depends on digging quickly, or you have to face enemy's machine-guns in the next minute, it does not really matter whether you are a vegetarian or a

or any other form of recognizing reality as it is, had been called Materialism and consequently despised. Now when the young people had to put up with professions and come into contact with other forms of this reality, they would call all this Ignoble. A true and noble German Idealist was the man who ignored the profane world, who lived in the Realm of Pure Thought. Had it only been pure thought, not much harm would have been done. In fact it was an attempt to apply the results of enthusiastic feeling and of a little thought to a world whose component parts you ignored on principle. If the world did not submit to what was expected to be the Higher Law, so much the worse for this Ignoble world. If anybody dared to hint that you could speak about Idealism and know your material as well, and then try to model it after your idea, he was called contemptuously a Practical Idealist and a Hypocrite. Very significantly this term of abuse, 'Practical Idealism', was often connected with the so-called English Shopkeepers' Morality.

It was not an easy position for a young man to be left alone in the ignoble world with his conscience as his god. In fact it was the Herculean task one is left with when one breaks away from traditional guidance, the Protestant task. If you take it as literally and as seriously as these enthusiastic youngsters did, you soon find out how utterly impossible it is to carry on with life when you are under the spell of having to pass every thought, action and value through the filter of your conscience. You might even find out that this conscience is anything but an unquestionable and independent god, and that it largely depends on tradition and nothing else.

Whether he was conscious of it or not, the position of the young German in the Youth Movement was, therefore, this: All the old categories of thinking and acting are obsolete and useless. New ones have to be created by the individual, a desperately difficult task. You have long

discussions about the problems of this task, these discussions make you feel Deep and Important, and invariably end in the statement that it all does not matter very much as long as you are happy in that wonderful Community of yours. You see, applying your intellect leads to disharmony, and applying your feelings leads to unity and happiness and reconciliation of all the problems. Somehow you realize that the dirty work of running the outer world has to be done, but as you are busy with the creating of new worlds, somebody else had better do it for you. There lived such a man in the good old days, when you as a schoolboy went roving about the countryside. He was one of you, who saw to the more technical details, the Leader. He was not elected nor nominated nor appointed by authority. Just one of you, who by some magic power became the crystallizing element for a group, beloved, worshipped, the Born Leader, *Der Geborene Führer*.

Perhaps I could state all this in a very few words. Perhaps I could say that as long as young people have no experience of the real world, they have some pretty odd problems, and they are bound to follow any personality that impresses their imagination.

I couldn't. This was Germany, the land of amateur philosophers. What in another mental climate would be a whim, an interesting brain-wave, a *bon mot*, becomes under German conditions a principle, a duty, in one word, a *Weltanschauung*. And everybody there who has a *Weltanschauung* is a zealous missionary for it, determined to spread it, to fight for it, and to lose his sense of humour. It is all very funny as long as you are nothing more than an onlooker.

It is terrifying irony that so many unpleasant and dangerous things should come out of something which was so lovable as the Youth Movement. You could scarcely find people of greater good-will than those you found in the groups belonging to it. They were beauty-loving, dutiful, they struggled earnestly with the problems of their con-

science and their responsibility. What can you do against people who tell you that all they are doing is sacrificing their whole lives to the Finding of the Right Path? Good-will in the wrong place is a most dangerous thing, because it robs the other person of all moral excuse. 'Don't shoot the pianist, he is doing his best.' He will never stop of his own accord, for he is convinced that he is playing for the benefit of humanity, and you are a heartless beast if you don't let him torture your nerves.

The youngsters in the Movement were very nice people indeed, enjoying themselves in singing folk-songs and dancing folk-dances and debating moral and cultural problems. You can hardly blame them for that. But they were the representatives of a certain German mentality, when they insisted on carrying their youthful attitude of incorrectly conceived idealism with them into grown-up life. And in their ranks was invented the terminology which became part and parcel of the basic German character in our time.

During the war the Movement entered its second stage. The first broader set had out-grown the school, and begun to look for a form of life where their ideals could be maintained. Very naturally they found already in the new sphere struggling groups of reformers who gladly made use of the fresh impulses floating into their ranks. From this time on, the Youth Movement cannot be separated from the Utopian and Reforming Movements. They formed one large community without a common programme, without even loose organization or a name. But everybody seemed to know who belonged to it.

I ran into one of the new crystallizations so typical of that time, when I got my commission. I had to go back to Germany to be trained as a gunner, for my regiment was the oldest artillery unit in the army, proud of an unbroken tradition from the days of the invention of gunnery.

For obvious reasons cavalry was held in the highest esteem in the army, but gunners were treated almost with

the same respect. The general opinion was that they had to be very intelligent. According to some cavalrymen, their profession was even too intellectual to be really soldierly. It happened that my regiment lived up to the legendary standard. I found officers who were interested in the technical side of their job and in hard professional work, and much less in drinking.

I had a small pleasant room in the barracks which afforded me a very welcome privacy. It was soon filled with flotsam of all kinds, books, pictures, and my guitar, which later played a certain part when the revolution broke out.

Being an old Wandervogel I immediately came in touch with the people connected with the Youth Movement in Darmstadt, our garrison town. There was, of course, a Nest and some singing and folk-dancing with Wandervogel girls, but more important, there was the Free Community of Craftsmen. The name this group had chosen is certainly somewhat misleading, for I cannot for the life of me state what craft or crafts they were practising. All I know is that they never talked about such things. Nor do I know how many people were living in the house of the Community. Probably the population fluctuated a good deal. The only thing that was clear was that the crystallizing factor, and the leading spirit was a very impressive young woman, Marie Buchhold by name. She would speak or read to the small circle of intimates and friends, and then we would have the usual discussions.

I don't seem to recollect her teachings, or rather, to relate what I remember of them would be misleading without further explanation. So, when she acquainted her audience with Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, this does not mean that there was any anarchistic tendency in the Community. It just meant that any contribution towards a new ethic was welcomed, and it did not matter that the teaching was as opposed to the humanitarian Russian as Nietzsche, who was himself in high esteem with us. Perhaps the most prominent feature was that political ideologies, groups or

opinions simply did not exist for the Community. One of the few things they really had in common was an absolute indifference towards political forms of any kind. Living in a merely imaginative or spiritual world, whichever you prefer to call it, they were preparing to descend into the material world and to shape it according to their findings, with a firm determination to neglect or to deny those forms of organization that shaped the world as it was at that time. It is certainly correct to say that another of their rules was to be obedient to the Spirit, at least that is what I think they would have called it. It did not matter what kind of a spirit it was as long as you were in earnest in trying to obey it, but you had to be consistent, and whatever the result of your thinking and striving might be, you had to put it into practice.

Perhaps I do Marie Buchhold and her community an injustice, for they did not stress that particular point overmuch. But anyway, consistency was one of the main doctrines in all these groups. It came from the old *Shaping Your Life According To Your Conscience Only*. And it was usually forgotten that conscience is not an invariable factor, and that consistency, much as might be said for it, is not a virtue in itself, but draws all its merit from the thing you are consistent about.

They were an insignificant group of enthusiasts? Perhaps. But a group armoured with the virtues of good-will and consistency, the typical exponents of a very widespread attitude. And in constituting themselves as a community, they took the first step towards instituting a practice which was bound to become the basis of Germany. They knew from the beginning that they would have to be economically independent of the world if they wanted to live in it after their own fashion. The Free Community of Craftsmen was not sufficient as a solution; it was still dependent on customers. But the final solution came later, the *Siedlung*. To the sword of missionary zeal and the armour of self-

righteousness, it added the impenetrable fortification of material independence.

Meanwhile things at the front had gone from bad to worse. Even officers spoke out about what so far only the rank and file dared to say among themselves: that the war was lost, and even if there could be a final victory, it could not possibly be important enough to save the whole show.

That looks exactly like what is called Bad Morale. I wonder whether it was. It is true, cases of troops refusing to attack became more frequent, but by no means to the extent of the war-machine's being seriously affected. Cases of insubordination became more and more frequent behind the lines. But it was not exactly bad morale.

I remember, when our company was on the march from billets somewhere in Flanders to the second line, the lieutenant who was supposed to command us lost his way. He did not tell us, but we could see from the way he fidgeted on his horse and his frequent, uneasy poring over the map, that he was absolutely at sea about his whereabouts. Someone in the ranks shouted: 'Get down from that horse. We don't need you there.' The officer pretended not to hear. The shouting became louder, other voices joining: 'Get down and at least walk the wrong way like us.' There followed an unprintable word. And then the company did something which under normal conditions, or indeed any conditions, would have been called mutiny.

A group of men, after a short consultation, turned on their heels and left in another direction. They shouted, 'Auf Wiedersehen — just in case you find the trenches after all'. By and by the others followed, there was no means of stopping them, the lieutenant followed last. The mutineers led the way — to the trenches.

When we passed the next village, he and his horse vanished somewhere, and we saw them both again only when we were back in our billets after the usual term of six days in the second and six days in the first line. When the



lieutenant came to inspect our kit, he was greeted by a voice: 'You go home and have a rest, and that's exactly what we are going to do now. We'll keep the blooming kit in order without you looking at it.' He went home, and nothing happened.

In the officers' mess nobody spoke about the war. Sometimes there was some talk about details connected with the job on hand. But not about the war. The subject was closed. All that there was was the task of carrying on, unless there came the order to stop.

It was almost the same with the men. They had never spoken about the war. But now they hardly spoke about anything at all. They cursed. Sometimes they sang. An old folk-song became very popular. It is about a hunter who has shot a doe. And now, when he sees the animal before him on the ground, dying, he gets sick of his profession, and breaks his gun on the nearest tree. It is, as you can see, a very sentimental ballad, and the men knew exactly why they now sang it every day.

But they did not break their guns on trees. When one night one man tried to start a discussion about 'turning the guns the other way — against the oppressors', bored voices answered: 'Mensch, mach' kein Theater — don't play the fool, man — perhaps we will do it, one day. But without that high-sounding talk of yours.'

Patriotic phrases, revolutionary phrases — it was all the same, they felt. And they were much too tired to do anything but go on with the daily routine, cursing, sometimes speaking of women as men speak who have not seen a woman for a long time, sometimes singing 'Das Rehlein'. The new recruits were under-nourished, their uniform and kit just good enough for the stage but unfit for anything more serious. They sometimes started to give voice to revolutionary slogans. But they did not talk very long. 'Mensch, mach' kein Theater — what do you know about this job?' Our guns were dangerous for the infantry, we

knew. They were old and worn-out. The gunners were given a sort of shell which served no other purpose than comforting the gunners. It would have been too bad if they could not have answered the fire from the enemy's batteries at all. At least these shells did not do much damage to our own men when as usual they fell short.

One night, in an observation post, I shared a hole with a lance-corporal, a Jew. He was a strong, big fellow and behaved like an intelligent and gallant soldier. He should have been an officer, as he had the school certificate which in peace-time would have entitled him to serve for only one year and to get a commission in the reserve. But he was only a lance-corporal, though that night he was detached from his unit to do an officer's duty. He said he did not mind. It was all the same, with or without shoulder-straps.

For once we spoke about the war. 'Whatever happens,' he said, 'we Jews will be getting what we always have got after a war. Either the war is won, then the reactionary parties will have a big boom, and they are anti-Semitic. Or the war is lost, which is more likely now, then we will be blamed for that.' I said: 'Don't talk nonsense. You have the Iron Cross already, nobody is going to blame you, even if some people may be foolish enough to sound anti-Semitic.' His answer was: 'I wonder whether they will leave us the Cross? We might have no right to it. It's a Christian sign.' I began to dislike him for his obviously exaggerated and prejudiced views. But he was a good soldier. I wonder where he is now? He may have been killed in action, in which case his name is now removed from the local war memorial.

Far behind the lines, in Germany, people had more time to bother about the side-lines of our show. There you could still hear the old familiar phrases about the *Siegfrieden*, and the new ones about Turning the Guns the other Way. But not very often. Probably the war would have gone on

and on and on, had not headquarters given the sign that all hope was now definitely gone and it was time to go home and have a revolution. Somehow the army was always in the state we were in when we marched over these hard roads in Flanders, behind the lines. We marched and marched, dog-tired, until we fell asleep marching. We did not notice that we were marching. We just went on. And on. Our feet began to bleed in the hard, bad boots, our bodies were over-strained and stiff with cramp. We did not feel it. We marched on. And then a voice shouted 'Halt'. And we broke down. We could have marched another mile. Or two. Or three. As long as we were not called back into consciousness.

## CHAPTER VI

La démocratie est le nom qu'on donne au peuple quand on a besoin de lui.

A. THIBAUDET

THE university of the small town of Giessen, about five miles from our estate, was famous for its medical institutions, and a considerable number of schools and other public buildings had been converted into military hospitals. By good luck and a little effort I had managed to be transferred to one of them, when the after-effects of gassing, combined with influenza, made it necessary for me to go to hospital.

About three hundred men, most of them amputation cases, were looked after by two war-time nurses and one convalescent patient who happened to be a male military nurse. A doctor went round in the morning. He was usually in a great hurry because he had to pay visits to two more hospitals each day. Only a few of the beds had covers, and wounds were dressed, if at all, with paper-dressings. During my stay one of the nurses died of influenza. There was no one to replace her.

As is to be expected under such conditions there was no discipline whatever in the hospital. When the N.C.O. on duty tried to enforce the regulation that lights should be extinguished at 10 p.m. he received a violent thrashing in the privates' room and did not even dare to report.

Generally we were very cheerful, singing and joking, playing cards and paying visits as far as we were able to move. I read through all the historical plays of Shakespeare in a very bulky edition which somebody had given to the hospital library. When later I had to receive treatment at one of the university clinics and could go out, I used to go about town freely. Nobody bothered about that, but

as we were supposed to be in at 10 p.m. at the latest, it was safer to don the less conspicuous uniform of one of the N.C.O.'s of the watch for nightly excursions.

Strange as it may seem, we never read newspapers, and nobody ever talked politics. Even my friends in town did not touch on political subjects in their conversation. Probably we were all sick and tired of it all. The war was lost, even if there were some battles won. A saying went round: 'We win the battles and England wins the war.' I wonder how many people were still reading the daily bulletin from G.H.Q. Certainly nobody in hospital did. The war had lasted too long for official optimism to be trusted.

A few days before I was to be released on convalescent leave, I went out early one morning to pay a visit to a friend on an estate in the neighbourhood.

It is strange how difficult it is to conceive a situation which is totally new and unexpected. There was nobody at the booking-office to sell me a ticket. Well, I had no time to lose with these lazy chaps if I wanted to catch my train. There was nobody at the gate either, and the gate was closed. It was rather early in the morning and perhaps they had altered the time-table. When I tried to find out at the inquiry bureau, it was empty. I stood in the great empty hall again, cursing to myself, slightly puzzled but not suspecting anything really exceptional. Just a disorderly crowd, all these railway people.

Across the wide, empty space there approached a man in field-grey. I looked at him with some embarrassment, for he obviously belonged to the notorious Second Class, wearing no regimental badge and no cockades.

The second class was a very severe punishment in the army. The soldiers who were degraded into it were treated worse than imprisoned criminals and usually made to work under fire where ordinary soldiers were too valuable. They wore no weapon and no badge, and were never allowed on leave. So the man approaching could be

nothing other than a fugitive from a penal battalion, and I had to face him in the empty hall. This, together with the puzzling absence of any railway-official, was a perfect nightmare.

It was quite clear that I should have to arrest him. But he did not seem to be frightened. Grinning amiably he came nearer, and when he spoke I couldn't believe that I was awake. He said: 'You'd better tear off those useless ornaments. If you don't you will get them torn off.'

To my military mind this was so far outside the bounds of possibility, that rather stupidly I said, 'Why?'

He explained in a conversational manner: 'Three sailors have come over from Kiel this morning. Now we have a revolution, you know? They,' he made a gesture round the station building, 'have already gone home.'

I touched the peak of my cap mechanically, and said, 'Thank you.'

I left the station and I can assure the reader that I felt exactly as Alice felt in Wonderland. There were very few people abroad, and the next soldier I ran into was obviously a Russian officer. He saluted politely, and I returned the salute dreamily. Then came another man in uniform. The cut of his coat indicated that he was a German officer. On his cap was a Bavarian but no German Reich cockade. He wore no shoulder-straps, and no sword. I stopped him and wanted to know what it was all about. Smiling, he gave me the information. Yes, he was a Bavarian first lieutenant, just come from Munich. Bavaria was a Republic since yesterday, didn't I know? Hence the missing German cockade. I had better take off a few superfluous things myself, if he might be allowed to give me some advice. The Russian? He was probably one of the Ukrainian officers from the camp in Wetzlar, they had been released. He was probably going to fight the Bolsheviks in Russia.

'But who is making this revolution?' I asked. He shrugged his shoulders. 'I don't know. I'm going home.'

‘But where is the Kaiser?’

‘I don’t know. They say he has abdicated.’

Even though I gradually realized that this was not Wonderland but serious reality, this last thing I could not believe. There might have been a revolt, or a revolution. I had seen this happen before, at my first garrison. The smiling Bavarian might have been suffering from some sort of shock. But surely the Kaiser would be at the head of his troops and . . . well, I did not exactly know what I expected him to do. It all sounded so utterly absurd in the almost empty street in that quiet little town. Rather stiffly I took my leave of the Bavarian.

I entered the café where I was a regular customer. The daughters of the owner insisted on ripping the offending parts off my uniform. They were in tears and told me that they had seen an officer manhandled in the street for refusing to part with his shoulder-straps. I did not like the idea of being made to look like a bandit, and went back to the hospital. Nothing happened on the way, and when I arrived in the school, the whole place was topsy-turvy in a general jollification. The doctor just went round with civilian trousers under his white apron, and the soldiers were roaring with laughter and telling the nurse that she was going to be socialized.

I went to the estate; there was nothing else to do at the moment. When I tried to get through to the garrison commander on the telephone, somebody answered, ‘Soldiers’ Council speaking’, and I rang off. The following morning I ripped off every superfluous thing from my uniform. In the morning paper the news was confirmed that the Kaiser had deserted his army and his dominions.

This happened only a week after an Imperial edict had given its consent to the introduction of the parliamentary system into the Reich government. The change was certainly of the utmost importance, but it took place within the system of conceptions which formed the basis of our

normal German thought. None of the unwritten, unquestioned and unquestionable laws, which formed the very foundation of our world, was violated.

But when the Kaiser ran away, 'to avoid unnecessary bloodshed', to quote the official explanation, it was quite a different matter. If, as we had been taught, the Monarchical Idea was the highest value in existence, then nothing could be 'unnecessary' in defending it. For us it was a gentleman's highest birthright to defend his sovereign in the front line and to lead His Majesty's faithful subjects against his enemies — never mind whether they were neighbouring countries or unfaithful subjects or the Devil himself. For us, to run away and to break the oath, was the most monstrous crime. It was impossible even to imagine that an officer would commit it.

I do not want to discuss the absolute value of such an attitude, or whether the defence of monarchy and the Kaiser would have been worth the life of one German in 1918. And it is of no consequence whether such an attempt could have been successful or not. All I want to state is that, by deserting, the Kaiser destroyed the foundation stone of what had been the edifice of our public morals.

Neither does it matter that Wilhelm II may have been right in his impression that by detaching his person, so hated by the Allies, from the German people, he would make things somewhat easier for his country. But the fact remains that the only method of getting himself out of the way in the manner he himself had prescribed to us, would have been to die at the head of his troops, or even to do what had always been expected of an officer who found himself in a situation from which there was no honourable escape.

It does not matter whether the crowds that shouted for a Republic represented a majority. By avoiding Honourable Suicide, Monarchy itself committed suicide. Monarchy became a matter of no consequence and of no interest in



Germany. For the Monarchist, abdication without putting up a defence meant the breakdown of everything. For the anti-Monarchist it was the confirmation of his opinion that this system had been hypocritical and decaying.

I don't believe that it really mattered much that 'the Monarchy lost the war'. It had been identified with the war, it is true, and hence the cry against the Kaiser. But generally people did not bother too much about the war being lost. They were far too happy that it was over and they wanted to forget all about it, which is the only sound and natural reaction for the individual. It is a different matter that the nation as such wanted to avoid the unpleasant consequences of defeat after they recovered from the first shock.

The day after the abdication I took a train to Darmstadt to find out whether there were any orders as regards the new state of affairs at the skeleton battalion. I arrived late at night, there was no sentry at the barracks and as I still had my little room I went there in order to get some sleep. The room was not locked as I had expected it to be and a stranger was lying on my bed. He was very angry at being disturbed, and claimed to be the secretary of the battalion's Soldiers' Council. All my things had gone, bookshelf and wardrobe were empty. I went to sleep in a private's quarters.

Next morning I found the only remaining officer, a lieutenant, who told me that only a few men were left and the only orders that had come through so far were to release the Class 1900 recruits and to retain all officers. The battalion commander had placed himself at the disposal of the Soldiers' Council but had been rejected. He had gone home, and so had all the others. He, the lieutenant, had been asked by the soldiers to take over the command, but had declined. He nevertheless tried to maintain some kind of order in the barracks which had already been raided by some airmen. His belongings had been taken as well as mine.

We were talking in a corridor and behind us on the wall there was a big green poster. 'The Workmen's and Soldiers' Council of Darmstadt has taken over the command. It guarantees the private property of all citizens. Looting will be punished by shooting.'

I took the poster with me and went to the Hessian Diet where the Council was sitting. They were very civil and friendly, and admitted having issued the poster. It had been the first act of their reign and they were rather proud of it. I said it was a very good poster indeed, and asked what they were going to do about my private property which had been confiscated. I did not necessarily want the airmen to be shot, but were they going to get my things back or 'guarantee' by paying cash? The friendly fellow was very embarrassed. Some people took the poster seriously and what could he do? Still, he was not so bad a diplomat and he found a solution. Probably my things had been stolen on Friday. And the Council had issued the poster on Saturday. So we parted friends.

In the meantime a telegram had arrived, saying that a general with his staff and a battalion of engineers had been billeted on the estate, and could I come home immediately as my mother was all by herself and needed help?

No, I was told that I had to stay, even if there was nothing whatever to do in the empty barracks. By order of the Soldiers' Council. And there was a sentry again at the gates to see to that. So I took the old sergeant-major, who was somehow or other in charge, to the canteen and we had a few drinks. At night he provided me with a new uniform and a military passport which was genuine in every stamp and signature, and I marched off with a bunch of Class 1900 recruits. I even got a 50-mark bonus.

Once in town I changed into the first civilian clothes I had worn for years, and went home via Frankfort on the Main. There I had to change trains, and after crossing the large hall, which was crammed full with soldiers, I happened to

stand behind a man in the uniform of the Hessian Dragoon Guards. He was loaded with bundles of all kinds and under his arm was a guitar in a brown cover. There was a hole in that cover which I knew, and I thought it quite right to seize it from him without asking first. He swore violently and a crowd gathered round us. It was easy to prove my claim as my name was written on the instrument, but as he stated that he had 'found' the guitar in the Artillery Barracks, the crowd insisted on my paying him a reward for finding it. There was nothing else to do but to give him a few coins and to accept the new order of things, on which obviously everybody except myself agreed. I wonder what other things of mine he had found, but the onlookers became definitely hostile when I hinted at the possibility. They all seemed to take the incident as a grand joke. As far as I could see, they were all recruits, not men from the line.

Later a cadet officer of the battalion let me know that he had saved the few things which had been left after the looting. They were with friends in Darmstadt. It was not much, mainly all my books except two, and I still wonder who has them. They were a collection of folk-songs from Austria and a philosophical essay with a very complicated title. It certainly does some honour to the education of the thief that he selected only these two.

All these things, it is true, had nothing to do with the Revolution as such. But as a rule we meet many unco-ordinated facts until we find the time even to think about anything as such. The new order, in my conception, was the comedy of the W. and S. Council, the genuine faked passport and the plunderers who wanted finders' rewards. Politics generally had been the business of the civilians, but I realized that, at least to a certain extent, it would be my affair as well from now on. I decided first of all to go out in search of the Revolution as soon as possible, and later to get myself some attitude towards the changed state of affairs. But other matters came up before I could do much thinking.

The troops on the estates behaved like normally disciplined soldiers, and took pains not to bother their hosts unnecessarily. But things were in a deplorable state. As there was no fodder, the only way to save the horses, for instance, was to sell them to the farmers. Of course the farmers preferred to buy horses for next to nothing to selling fodder which was scarce anyway. The men still had their weapons but hardly more than rags for uniforms and their boots were in a dreadful state. All the roads were full of cars which, for lack of petrol, had been abandoned, and the peasants took them for nothing. In our park I collected a small car, two machine-guns and a complete field telephone set.

One of my private rooms was occupied by the general's A.D.C. who had had a special telephone line installed. All public means of communication being commandeered by the military, it was difficult to get in touch with the outer world, but the friendly A.D.C. used to put his line at our disposal whenever we required it. And so it was at his office that I heard the news of my father's death.

It came very unexpectedly. As my father had retired with the rank of major he had been given various posts from the beginning of the war. He was an elderly man, and by no means fit for active service, so he was first made a Railway Transport Officer, and then given the command of a Prisoner of War Camp. I had once spent a few days in that camp where he ruled some thousand Russians and a few hundred Frenchmen. I spoke to a French medical officer, and he said: 'We all like the old major very much. He is a real gentleman, and he tries to make us as comfortable as possible.' I am certain that he did, and that he considered it a duty to 'show German chivalry towards the beaten enemy'.

When the peace treaty with Russia was signed, he was given the command of a so-called Mobile Landsturm Battalion, an infantry unit of elderly men, just fit enough to occupy what were supposed to be quiet trenches in the

Ukraine. He was billeted in the castle of a Polish count and got on very friendly terms with the family. I think there was some distant family relationship from the days of the dynastic union of Saxony and Poland some two hundred years before. There was peace between Germany and whatever might have been supposed to be the government of the country, a country which perhaps belonged to the imaginary Kingdom of Poland or the Ukrainian Republic or Russia. The Landsturm men kept up a kind of military show with sentry-go and roll-calls, and my father wrote home to have a few toys sent for the children of his host as a Christmas present.

One day troops marched into the village, uniformed, if uniformed at all, in Russian kit and only partly armed. They called themselves National Poles and claimed to be authorized by what they called their government to re-equip themselves with arms at the German Landsturm post. When my father refused they threatened to use force, which, in view of their poor appearance, was not taken very seriously. But it seemed that some of the old Landsturm men did not see why they should not give the Poles their rifles, and so when the latter came back at night they were well enough armed to overthrow the post. The old fathers of families did not put up much of a fight. The news of the sailors' revolt in Kiel had already reached them, and was there not peace in the country?

My father was awakened by the shooting outside, and rushed out of bed, throwing his great-coat over his night-shirt and taking his heavy army revolver. The door of his room was locked, as he later learned from the countess who did not want the old man to be involved in what she considered to be an unnecessary risk. He tried the window, and managed to climb down into the park. A Polish sentry was already posted at the gate and when shot at by my father shot back. The bullet went through the thigh. It was not a dangerous wound, but it ended the fight and

the old man was taken prisoner. The Polish officer in charge expressed his regret and ordered the transfer of his prisoner into a hospital in Biala.

It seems to be uncertain who it was held any power in Biala at the time. We only learned later that an old friend of my father's occupied the hospital with another Landsturm unit in order to liberate the German prisoners. We had a letter from my father, telling the whole story and stating that he had been well looked after in hospital and that he was about to be transferred to a German hospital train.

We were expecting him any day, when the telegram arrived saying that he was 'put on the bier in Military Hospital, Lyck, East Prussia'. And would we please wire what should be done with the corpse.

There was nothing to be done except to take the initiative personally. All the railways and roads were congested with the armies floating back from the east and the west; there was shooting in the towns and a lot of councils and governments governing one against the other.

All I could do was to try to get through to East Prussia. It was not as difficult as might have been expected. By a coincidence the general left the estate the same day and he took me as far as Berlin in a commandeered train. Apart from a little private war between a rifleman and a machine-gunner, which delayed my journey from one station in Berlin to another, there were no obstacles. The only annoying thing was that after leaving Berlin there was no food obtainable at the stations and I did not dare to leave the train; nobody could guarantee whether there would be another one. A nice looking young girl came to share my compartment as we passed through what is now called the Polish Corridor. She obviously belonged to the local gentry. She looked at my uniform which bore no distinctions, and burst out: 'Are you an officer? Isn't this the hell of a business? I say, you look damned hungry, won't you share my sandwiches?' She certainly did belong to the East Prussian gentry.

As luck would have it I ran into the father of an old comrade from the Cadet Corps. He was incidentally the most popular man in the small town of Lyck and a high official in the State Forestry Department. I do not know what I would have done without the help of this gentleman who put me up at his house and worked miracles with the local authorities, both old and new. The town, still showing signs of the Russian bombardment and occupation years earlier, was full of soldiers who were running wild. There was already a kind of loot-exchange in one of the streets, where a stranger tried to sell me a railway-wagon full of military boots. But with the aid of my forester-friend I managed to get hold of a parson and such officers as remained in the garrison to have the corpse transferred to the station in a dignified manner. I knew that it might have been dangerous to display the former appropriate military customs, but my old man would certainly have done the same to a brother officer in the same circumstances.

My destination was Weimar, where the family maintained a mausoleum. So I started on the strangest journey I have ever experienced. The coffin was put into a coach which could technically be attached to any kind of train, and I had to share the luggage-van with the escort of the other coaches. The countryside was deep with snow and it was bitterly cold, but we kept a bright fire going in a kind of iron basket with coals from the engine.

When we left Lyck station, the officers of the escort party stood at the salute on the platform. I returned their salute from the open sliding-door, and then retired to the fire. Immediately my companions gathered round. A big fellow said: 'Well, out with it. What have you got?'

'What do you mean?'

'What have you got in that coach of yours?'

'Military corpse transport.'

Another man interfered. 'I have seen the coffin.' But the big one laughed: 'They would not give a coach for that kind

of sport now. Do you ask me to believe there is a corpse in it?’

I shrugged my shoulders. But he would not leave me alone.

‘Going to Berlin, aren’t you? I don’t know what they are sending, but I tell you it’s no use delivering anything in Berlin. There is no government. They are all robbers. What do you think I am travelling in this blooming train for? I’ll pay cash, for whatever you have got.’

Under his uniform coat he showed two sandbags full of paper money, tied to his belt.

After the train had proceeded at a snail’s pace for a few hours, it was uncoupled at a small station, but by that time the big man had bought a number of wagons from the other escorts. All I remember is that two were full of soap. When they broke up the train because someone commandeered our engine I hurried to my coach, still followed by the big man who was determined not to give up. Only when I threatened to shoot him did he go away, grumbling.

I had ample opportunity to get used to this game during the next fortnight. A few hours’ travel. Soldiers and railway officials and civilians outbidding each other for my mysterious ‘goods’. Breaking up the train because someone took the engine. Defending the coach against too inquisitive people, who simply refused to believe that anybody would travel through Germany with a corpse at that time. Twice I had to shoot. The first time when a couple of men had already broken into the coach and were just trying the coffin, the second time when a fellow in an obviously stolen officer’s uniform ordered his gang to ‘confiscate’ the coach. In both cases they ran as soon as I started firing over their heads.

Once, while looking for another train to take me farther, I found two or three wagons with a smoking engine on a side-track. When I approached, the muzzle of a machine-gun appeared in the sliding-door of the first one, and a voice told me to put my hands up. I shouted my request and asked who they were.



. They were the only decent people I met during that journey. They were three soldiers, from somewhere in Russia, put in charge of two wagons with semi-precious metals on their way to the government in Berlin — if they were able to find one. Actually they had been fighting their way through all kinds of 'armies, gangs and governments', as they put it. They doubted very much whether anybody in Berlin would be interested in their stuff, but they had their orders and a sporting ambition to fulfil their duty. They were very fine fellows indeed, and they got me safely as far as Berlin.

It was about dawn when I arrived in Weimar nearly a fortnight later. Dead tired and hungry, with a week's growth on my chin, I stepped out and went to see the station-master in charge. 'Wagon Stettin 7324, military corpse transport from Lyck, shunted to siding 3. I shall unload in the afternoon.' I had reported in that way a hundred times, and I am not likely to forget that number in another twenty years from now.

The station master barked, 'What do you think I am, an undertaker? You can't leave a coffin on siding 3. You take it with you, now, and if you don't I am going to put that coffin of yours out in front of the station myself.'

I mustered all my self-control and told him: 'I am going to town to get a bath and some sleep. Then I shall get a decent military escort and fetch the coffin. If I find the coffin outside the station or anywhere other than in the wagon, I'll have you shot beside it. Good morning.' I would have done it, and no doubt I could have done it. This was the right method in those days and I had learned my lesson.

At the hotel where I had stayed many times, the night-porter refused to open the door, and I don't blame him. I must have looked like a bandit, dirty with soot and unshaven. He gave in when I drew my gun, and when he recognized me he apologized many times, which was quite

unnecessary. In the afternoon I got some soldiers and an officer, and we transferred the coffin intact. When I spoke to the commander of what was left of the garrison, he told me that I could get a company of the right strength for a major's funeral, but that I should have to pay the soldiers. I am certain that my father would not have liked being escorted by soldiers who were given extra pay for this duty, like undertaker's men. So it was a civil funeral, attended by all the officers in Weimar and a huge crowd. He will be the last one of his line to rest in the mausoleum.

## CHAPTER VII

We are a Royalist family, and if being for the people is red — then we are Red, sir.

THE DUKE OF ATHOLL,  
as reported by the *Evening Standard*

I HAD never before attended a political meeting or even as much as seen one from a distance. I had been too young and for the reasons mentioned before not interested enough to go to an indoor meeting, but I believe that open-air demonstrations were completely banned before the war and they certainly were not allowed during the war.

Now, back in Giessen, I was looking forward to the new experience which might throw some light on the chaotic events that had taken place. The Social Democratic Party was going to demonstrate in a public square before the town hall. They marched in several thousand strong, with banners flying. Neither the men and women nor the ensigns looked in the least like what one is used to associate with the word 'revolutionary'. Many faces amongst the crowd I knew and I was vaguely surprised to find here. Nothing in these faces indicated determination or rejoicing, or any emotion unusual in everyday life. The banners were made of heavy red plush, embroidered with emblems of crafts or trades, much the same as the banners of any rabbit-breeding or singing association. How could I know they had had to be made to look inconspicuous under the Imperial regime? They only looked dull and out of date to me.

A man addressed the crowd from an improvised platform. 'Now we have reached our goal,' he said, 'our struggle, our heroic sacrifices have not been in vain. We are standing on the threshold of a better future.'

I knew nothing whatever about their struggle and to connect that dull crowd with heroism only seemed ridiculous.

Since I had been supposed to be a hero myself, I thought that I knew all about it. Probably this was the same thing as a general addressing soldiers coming from the line. It was his job to talk about heroism and such things and to put off the moment when we should be able to have a good sleep and get rid of the lice. To judge by the revolutionaries' faces they must have felt much the same. But anyhow, the leader at least spoke in simple terms and had some clear ideas about what had happened, and I was totally ignorant of the reasons and the aim of the Revolution. There must have been a revolution and not only a break-down. At least, the posters and the newspapers said so. So far, I had only experienced the crash of the German war machine, the ideals of my class and a good deal of public morality. The crowd in the square, though not very enthusiastic, had the advantage over me of experiencing something positive. It was the beginning of a better future for which they had struggled. They claimed to have worked to build something. All I could claim was to have helped to maintain something and to have failed. It was all very tangled and embarrassing and I went home unenlightened.

For the first time I took to reading the newspapers. They did not help me a lot. 'We want a better Germany, free and great.' It was like hearing the same tune in another key. The Pan-Germanistic Vaterlandspartei had said precisely the same. Now it was Social Democrat. 'Down with hunger and misery! Down with the slums! Peace, Liberty, Bread!' Well, was there really anyone who was for hunger and slums, or against Peace, Liberty and Bread? The question seemed only to be — how do you go about it?

The answer, and an astonishing one, came when the new parliament was about to be elected. Obviously you could have all the good things for the asking if only you voted for one of the parties. No matter which, they all promised the same. And all the proclamations began: 'The Party stands firm and determined upon the ground of the established

facts.' So nobody was against the Revolution? Even the Kaiser, though he was no longer authoritative for me, was of the same opinion. When announcing his abdication he said that he expected us to help the men who were actually holding power in Germany. Who were they? The Deputies of the People in Berlin, Ebert, Noske, Scheidemann, and the rest? They were just about to risk their power by asking the people to vote. Or was there no risk? And were there any 'established facts' before the National Assembly was elected? And would there be a German Reich at all? The papers stated that a Reich Conference had decided upon maintaining German unity. But all the *Länder* seemed to have broken away from the so-called unity. The very first thing they did was to print their own postage stamps and to abolish the Reich cockade on the uniforms. The white and red Hessian flag was shown unchanged. But the black, white and red of Germany had disappeared.

If you took the party manifestos seriously, it all boiled down to the question whether the revolution was finished or had not yet begun. All the parties concerned with the National Assembly seemed to believe that it was all over and only technical questions remained to be solved. But there was the Spartakus Bund, a group which did not take part in the electoral contest and called for a revolution to come. It was not so easy to find out what they actually aimed at. In the small town there were no Spartakists, or at least they were not to be seen. A paper which came from Berlin stated that the group was in favour of something called Full Socialisation. But more or less every party seemed to be for Socialism, whatever that might have been. When I asked people in our own circles, they said it was something terrible they were doing in Russia, and it meant dividing all personal property in equal parts amongst the population and making all women common property.

This is not a silly joke. There were very few people amongst the bourgeois classes who had any idea about the

programme of Socialism, and most of them actually believed that the 'Reds' were a kind of vice-racket, preaching nothing but promiscuity and organized theft. To me it seemed utterly unbelievable after having read a few articles by Karl Liebknecht, the Spartakist leader. But I cannot say that I had any clear conception of Socialism either.

All I could see was: We have a Republic now, and I don't mind that since the Kaiser has become a deserter. Nobody seems to be against the new state of affairs, and everybody seems to agree that some kind of republican-democratic-socialist order has to be established. We shall best find out how to do it by electing the National Assembly. If there are enough people for the mysterious Full Socialisation which seems to be the final aim of the Social-Democrats as well as of the Spartakists, then the Assembly will introduce it in the proper way. But it is certainly not much use shooting and keeping out of the electoral contest. We have just lost a war, the enemy is marching into Germany, and the most important thing is to clean up the unholy mess as soon as possible. After everything which was our basis to stand upon is broken down, we shall have to think how to run our lives and the country in a better and stabler way from now on. What we need is to get a breathing space and do a lot of thinking.

This was the point of view of a nineteen-year-old and politically ignorant boy, but I am positive that the opinions of most of the voters were hazier still. And my generation had an important task before them. In other countries too the young soldiers between nineteen and twenty found it difficult to adapt themselves to normal standards, but there was some kind of normality left. To us was left the task of building up a new normality; and it was left to us more than to the older people. We were the least worn-out of the lot, and as soldiers, we were looked on as the last pillar of Order, and indeed as the Actual Power. So, whether it was childish or not, what is sometimes called the Lost

Generation was to play an important part in the shaping of the New Germany. And the overwhelming majority of that generation was Lost indeed.

Every thinking person must have felt lost and crushed under the responsibilities of those days and weeks, until they got used to living in a kind of void in which they had to build from the very beginning. Two foundations were possible, Tradition or Science. It has always been the boast of German Socialists more than those of other countries, that their political system was a scientific one. Karl Marx, the prototype of the German Professor, had known all the facts and brought them into a scientific frame. So he must have been able to fulfil the claims of all true science, to predict facts by means of conclusions. To believe in Science is very much akin to believing in Predestination.

The other possible foundation, Tradition, appealed to me more strongly for obvious reasons. It seemed more human and the natural thing for anyone of my breeding to look for. Yet it could not be the Imperial tradition. What was left of it was certainly not very appealing. The old Conservative Party came back disguised under the name of German National People's Party. They declared that they stood 'upon the ground of the established facts' like the rest and sounded like good democrats which they either were — why then not unite with the real Democrats? — or which they were not — then why the masquerading if you stand for decency and truth as claimed? Only later they declared themselves to be Monarchists, and they would have made a poor show indeed in the election campaign with a runaway Kaiser.

My instinct was to remain a Monarchist, but obviously this was simply not the question on hand. The mess had to be cleaned up as decently as possible, and was there a tradition to show how to do it? There was one. The first dream of a United Germany, the Revolution of 1848, had started a tradition which was fairly vivid still in the heads of many

people I liked. The *48ers* in their time had established the first German Parliament in a church in Frankfort on the Main, composed of all the representatives of Thought and Art in their time. There was a party now in the election campaign that claimed that heritage, the Democrats.

Later it was said that the Democratic Party was largely filled by what was called Uprooted Intellectuals and Jews. There is some truth in this and it might have been this reason which made me join that party. As I said before, there was hardly any German patriotism, because one can only love a country which exists within the boundaries of personal contact. People were Bavarians or Rhinelanders in their hearts, and Germans only as far as there was a germ of a German Reich idea. I had been born in one of the Thuringian States; the more pleasant memories of my childhood belonged to Hesse; and so far as blood plays a part in our feelings there was almost nothing in me to relate me to any German landscape. But my class used to have a Reich idea, represented by the Kaiser. It was not exactly National in the modern sense of the word, and you can read all about that in the preface of Shaw's *Saint Joan*. It was an abstract and super-national idea, and it was easy to change to another abstract idea after it broke down.

From the Allies' point of view it was perhaps the greatest mistake to allow Germany to grow a new Reich idea after the war was over. If the same energetic force which was put behind the complicated system of the Versailles Treaty had been put behind something similar but more intelligent than the clumsy attempts of General Mangin and the French Army of Occupation towards the establishment of a Rhineland Republic, Europe would perhaps have been spared the menace and the disgrace of the Hitler regime.

In the first months of 1919 Giessen University introduced a special course for ex-soldiers, and I joined it to study Philosophy. As my father had left enough money for me not to be forced to earn a living, the choice of occupation in the



new civilian life was perhaps more difficult still. Too great a freedom of choice where nothing seems to be stable is not very useful. But I felt strongly that, with everything broken down and the need to build up from the beginning imperative, nothing was more important than to go down to the root of things as deeply as possible. What else could be more suitable for that purpose than the Philosophical Faculty?

The first term was one great disappointment. Somehow the system of learning at the University reminded me of my first military experiences. Examinations and how to get through them as easily and as quickly as possible seemed to play the same part as parades and the inspecting colonel. The young soldiers especially thought obviously of nothing else but of taking their degree quickly and getting some position or other. I could not blame them, if they had to earn a living, and I was grateful that I had no need to consider such things. But the spirit of the degree as a kind of supreme and final aim was not restricted to the poorer undergraduates. It is a German disease. The doctor's degree, apart from certain exceptions, is much too cheap and easy to obtain to be worth much, yet it has a magic power for Germans. And as the title is more in demand than the learning, the universities were forced to shape themselves accordingly.

Meanwhile politics went on their violent way. More shooting went on in Berlin and in other cities. Appalling news came from Russia and its bordering states, and one of these items of news came to destroy the nice little privacy to which I was about to settle down.

During the war I had met a distant cousin of ours when I was on leave at a spa. I immediately recognized him from a curious peculiarity of his. He was a Knight of the Order of St. John, but as he had never before been in the army he had been conscripted at the beginning of the war as a private. Now he was wearing on a private's uniform the eight-pointed white cross of the order which gave

him the rank of captain, and neither men nor officers knew what to do when they met him. He took it as a great joke, never knowing whether he was saluted or had to salute himself. Through him I met a whole group of his Baltic countrymen, all of them more or less related to our family. They were simple, easy-going people who liked a drink, full of amiability and good humour.

Now we learned about whole families in these circles being murdered in the newly founded Baltic states. It was not quite clear who had murdered them and why, nor what exactly these states were. It did not matter, for the fact itself was established strongly enough. We had posters in the University, calling for the formation of volunteer corps to go to the Baltic countries to their aid. Then a friend of mine told me about one of these corps being built up by members of the Wandervogel. The rallying place was Potsdam, and, besides being a duty, the expedition promised to be a great adventure. I detested the wholesale murder of the Baltic barons genuinely enough, but I admit that my disappointment at the University combined with the spirit of adventure to play an important part in my decision to join the volunteers.

Together with another of my Wandervogel friends I set out for Potsdam. The Volunteer Corps was the most astonishing unit you could imagine. The commander was a famous count, a former chief of the most distinguished regiment of the Guards. He was well known as one of the few colonels who always led their men personally, in every attack, and had been wounded five times. A grand old soldier of the finest breeding. The unit about to be formed was a so-called mixed detachment, containing several companies of riflemen, some machine-gunners and a squadron of cavalry. So far there was about one company and a few unattached riders in the barracks.

By German standards they were a very strangely mixed lot. Up to then, soldiering had never been a 'profession'.

and to the German mind it should never be one. It was an honorary duty and 'hired soldiers' was an abusive term. Now the Volunteer Corps advertised their units, promising good pay, good food and beautifully smart uniforms. It was an unheard-of thing, and attracted very different types of people.

Much has been written about these volunteers and the part they played in post-war Germany, but in certain ways our unit was different from the majority. To begin with, it did not exactly belong to the later notorious Baltic Troops, and was not at that time under the command of von der Goltz, nor had the German Minister for War, Noske, any say in our strange show. We had to sign a contract, pledging us to 'serve the Lithuanian Government', but I have never been able to find out who exactly that government was or where it was located. By signing the contract we became Lithuanian citizens, but I have my doubts as to the citizenship's being recognized by anyone except the mysterious government itself. We were promised land in Lithuania, probably the soil which used to belong to the murdered barons, but nobody asked too many questions. Again and again it was emphasized that we were not going to fight 'Bolshevists' but gangs of robbers invading the country. It was stated that we would be safe if we went into Berlin when off duty, as we did not in any way belong to the hated Noske Guards. I wonder whether the Berlin workmen knew us by the corps' badges. There were so many fancy uniforms about, and later it was quite interesting to see how the taste of the Germans, once it had been given free rein, influenced the future uniform of Reichswehr and, later still, Nazi uniforms.

As a matter of fact, only a very small part of the Free Corps was composed of Wandervögel and other members of the Youth Movement. We formed a special infantry group wearing a green, red and gold stripe on our sleeve, the old Wandervogel colours. One day, in a playful mood, I drew

the Wandervogel crest, a crane, on the steel-helmet of one of my fellows. The others liked it, and asked me to adorn their tin-hats with the same sign. I did, and then there was not enough charcoal left for a whole crane on my own helmet. So I drew the general sign of all the Wandervogel and of similar groups on my helmet: the Swastika.

Probably I was the first soldier in Germany to wear it with the uniform. Later the notorious Ehrhardt Brigade brought the swastika back from their adventures in the Baltic States and their song 'Hakenkreuz am Stahlhelm . . .' gave a very different meaning to our symbol and made it popular for the first time outside the Youth Movement.

At that time Herr Hitler had not been heard of in Potsdam; I doubt whether the first group of National Socialists had yet been formed in Munich. Later, when I was first told of the new party I took it for granted that it was nothing but another attempt on the part of the Youth Movement to find a political programme. There were only two things which the different groups and associations in the Movement had in common: the swastika and the greeting 'Heil!' — and Herr Hitler adopted both. What I learned about the programme of the new party was apt to confirm the idea that the National Socialists belonged in some way to the Youth Movement. There had always been small groups cherishing ideas of 'Higher Breeding' and advocating German Socialism, revival of the Guild system, abolition of money interest or other romantic remedies against social diseases, and the note they struck was the same semi-religious enthusiasm in which the new man was preaching. Besides, the little that was known about the personality of the Leader in Munich left no doubt that he was some sort of Wandervogel himself. He went about without a hat and grew his hair rather long, he detested smoking and drinking and he was a vegetarian.

As far as I know, Herr Hitler has never a member of the Wandervogel, the *Freideutsche Jugend* or any similar organization. But he was definitely a member of, and his

party a group within, the Youth Movement. One did not enter that great and unorganized brotherhood by applying for a membership card. Members were recognized by certain symptoms, all of which Herr Hitler and his party were showing. It was even not necessary to display the fact by wearing a swastika or greeting 'Heil!'

As far as there is something which might be called German mentality, the Youth Movement was its closest expression; i.e. that part of the German character which makes it distinct from the character of other peoples, can be seen clearly in the attitude, spirit and habits of the Youth Movement. If you want to understand Herr Hitler's and the German people's mind, you have to study the specific type of German reformer and *Schwärmer* as you would have found it in the Youth Movement's groups and *Siedlungen*.

The political opinions amongst the men were a chaotic mixture, the ground-note being republican and adventurous at the same time. Many inclined towards Socialism of different kinds, but there were a sort of romantic neo-Conservatives as well.

One day we had a visitor, a man known to some of us as an old member of the Youth Movement. He had been a lieutenant in the German army, and now he was wearing a strange uniform of an unknown khaki shade and foreign decorations. We questioned him about a big red and gold star which was fastened at his chest, and he said laughingly that it was a souvenir, a Russian order. As anything was possible in these days, we accepted the explanation. But I remembered that star well enough to find out later that it was nothing but the sign of the Soviets, and he most probably was an officer in the Red Guard. The Soviet Russian Star looks different from the German version.

The days went by uneventfully with some drilling of recruits, guards and much visiting of the Berlin cafés. Nothing was quite established yet, but the discipline was surprisingly good. Then things happened,

We were sitting in the Wandervogel quarters, singing according to our inevitable custom, playing the guitar and arguing, when the company commander paid us a surprise visit rather late in the evening. The captain was a former member of the General Staff and we liked him as a man who knew his job and did not mix duty with private life. He appeared very excited, and asked for five volunteers for special duty. I went with them, and the captain accompanied us to the armoury where we were handed rifles. On the way he explained that he had been forced to arrest several members of the Corps on charges of stealing uniforms and victuals. They had to be transferred to the military prison in town.

The men were in the courtyard, watched by a lieutenant and a sergeant. They were five prisoners, and we were surprised to find one of them in civilian clothes. But of course you could not ask questions. We were each instructed to go behind one prisoner, and to shoot to kill immediately if anyone made an attempt to escape. Rather an unnecessary fuss about a few stolen trousers and loaves, but those were the orders, so off we went.

We were approaching the canal that runs through Potsdam, when the man in civilian clothes, who was walking in front of me, made a movement as if to start to run. I remembered all my experiences of the revolt two years before, and told him in a sharp hiss not to be a fool, as I would have to shoot, as he damned well knew. He walked quietly on. But at the nearest corner, he threw his hat into my face and ran.

For five years I had been trained to obey commands without thinking. There was the man, running for his life, in the dim light of the street-lanterns and just about to go round the corner some thirty yards away. At this moment he was nothing but a target which I was ordered to hit. The shot went right through the heart and killed him instantly. The other prisoners crowded together like a frightened flock of

sheep, and we carried the dead man the last few hundred steps to the prison building.

Then I went to the captain's house to report. There had been the command, to shoot to kill. But still, it seemed to be out of proportion to the alleged offence. When I finished my report, the captain shook me by the hand and said: 'I'm glad we got rid of that man. He was a Red agitator, you know.'

I did not know. But what I knew was that I would have preferred to resign rather than take him to prison. Had they only told us the truth about these prisoners, the situation would not have arisen. But then another man would have shot him. In the general state of affairs I could not think it a crime deserving of death in Germany to be 'a Red agitator', even though I knew next to nothing about their ideas.

The troops under the authority of the Social Democrat minister Noske were hated by the working people because they were supposed to be Whites. 'Noske's blood-hounds' were decidedly unpopular, and we had been comforted repeatedly with solemn statements that our Volunteer Corps had nothing to do with them. And why had we been told again and again that we were not going to fight the Bolsheviks? The only possible reason was that the Corps had no intention of being considered White. And, after all, we were Lithuanians and had nothing to do with party differences in Germany. And how was it possible that being Red was a crime in a country where the supreme authority was by common vote in the hands of Social Democrats? They were Germany now, and all our patriotism obviously was due to them. Even the Kaiser had expected us to help the 'man who held the actual power'.

But perhaps the man I shot had actually been stealing. It would not have excused my killing him, but perhaps after my meetings with the plunderers on the railway, it would have been less disgusting. The captain admitted that there was in fact no question of stealing. He had no need to tell me

the obvious reason why we had been told differently in the first place.

It would not have been necessary to lie to me. Given a command without any explanation, I would have shot anyway. But why did a superior officer give an explanation at all, and an untrue one at that? It was not up to me to criticize him but it worried me very much. Something must be wrong. And even if a soldier under command is not responsible for his actions, he cannot help having some sense of right and wrong left in him, if he is to be what I understood to be a good and honest soldier.

A few days later the man that had been shot had his funeral with full military honours and I wonder what his relatives who attended thought of that. The whole Wander-vögel group was told that the shooting had caused an uproar outside and therefore we were not to go out singly or unarmed. We got hand-grenades and were given the advice to put our wardrobes against the windows as somebody might throw unpleasant things into our quarters. It would not be made public, who actually fired the shot.

The next day I went with some friends for a walk into the countryside and we had a bathe in one of the many lakes surrounding Potsdam. The water was extremely cold and I did not notice that in wading into it I had trodden on a piece of glass. It was a nasty cut and they had to carry me home, where I was put up in the barracks sick-room. A sentry was put before the door, which seemed to me a very stupid measure as it indicated rather clearly that an attack on me was to be expected. But then I did not know that while we were on our walk the colonel had assembled the men in the courtyard and told them what a good soldier and good shot I had proved to be. A model so to speak, ready to fulfil a command without hesitation. That I only learned weeks later.

Next morning the leg looked very bad indeed and the medical officer said comfortingly: 'I hope I can save it as far



as the knee. I'm going to operate immediately.' They were very ready with the saw after the war, but I had no intention of losing my leg which I just had brought back safely from the war, and refused bluntly to have it off. Neither reasoning nor military language were able to shake my decision, and I had the wound treated by the ambulance-man in the way I thought best. I did not lose my leg after all. The last few weeks the captain offered to put me up at his parents' house. The whole family were spoiling me and trying to give me a nice time and I came to know the captain better. But I did not dare to discuss the recent event with him. It was impossible for me to understand properly what kind of a man he was. He was a pleasant fellow, educated and well-bred, and still he had given an untrue explanation about the arrests and looked on the death of that man as a lucky event and nothing else. It was just that I came across the type for the first time.

When I was able to walk on crutches, I gave notice to cancel my contract with the 'Lithuanian Government' and had my services recorded in the genuine faked military passport from Darmstadt. When I got home I threw it into the fire.

After the shooting, things generally had taken a bad turn in the Volunteer Corps. The better part of the Wandervögel followed my example and quitted the service, and so did many of the officers and men. The rest were thrown into another Free Corps and went to the Baltic States. I don't know what became of them.

## CHAPTER VIII

Ach Kind, glaub' deiner Mutter nicht —  
Good-bye, fare thee well —  
Denn sie ist alt und küsset nicht!  
Hurrah my boys, we're outward bound!

*German Sea-chanty*

WHEN I came home the University was on holiday, and I gained a little breathing space to decide whether I should just resume my philosophical endeavours as though nothing had happened. Somehow I knew that it would be my final destiny to which I would have to come back. But it seemed that the University did not offer enough or the right kind of help and I was far from being able to stand on my own feet. My world-conquering cousin who had held a commission in the same Darmstadt artillery regiment and was now a first lieutenant in a Noske Volunteer Corps discussed with me the question of taking up a military career. There was certainly something to be said for that, especially when you cannot see any solid ground under your feet and everything seems to fluctuate. There must always be an army, and it will always have to be organized according to its own professional laws. So the question was only how quickly the armed gangs, which had been haphazardly put together, would develop into a real army again.

It would mean a life without problems and devotion to a job, the usefulness of which we never questioned. Farming and soldiering, the traditional professions of our caste, would never change essentially, and as the estate was taken out on a long-term lease by the small peasants of the village there was little opportunity of farming.

I used to like soldiering a good deal, but I found it hard to

overcome certain objections to the way it was organized. Somehow the army seemed unable to put up with its double task of being a relevant instrument of war and at the same time the representative of power and glory. You have to handle the two tasks apart from one another, otherwise you will fall short in one or the other. In Germany they always wanted it both ways. As a concession to modern warfare the field-grey uniform was introduced, but at the same time the tunic had to be smart according to standards developed on the parade-ground in peace-time. There is no job on earth where there is a greater need for practical and comfortable kit than active soldiering, and any tramp was better fitted to live in the open than a soldier.

And why that senseless tradition of 'thinking simply and in a soldierly way', the scoffing at 'brainy' people? It so happens that modern warfare has no liking for that traditional simplicity of mind. Still, what was called intellectualism was believed to be identical with civilian spirit. It can't be just coincidence that so many great soldiers were in fact civilians outside the narrow boundaries of the military spirit and therefore allowed to look at their problem in the proper light. Marshal Foch's famous question: '*De quoi s'agit-il?*' was not popular in Germany. The answer would always have been: 'But everybody knows that. The facts of the case were established long ago and you had better put your nose into the regulations.'

Despising 'intellectuals' was not only a fancy in the mess, it was an accepted thing throughout the whole of the army. It was a fixed joke with the sergeant-majors. 'Six men to volunteer for special duty. Preferably University men. Ten more, preferably linguists.' And then the sixteen fellows go off cleaning lavatories and scrubbing barracks on a Saturday afternoon. It did them no actual harm, and I did not mind being one of the victims during my training. You even can get fun out of it if you know how, and after all the scrubbing has to be done by somebody. But it was a

principle to show how utterly worthless brains are supposed to be in the army. But what a waste, if it is done always in that way. Imagine the head of a firm, who makes the charlady do the accounts and the accountant dust the office! It might be a useful experience in the beginning for the clerk-apprentice, to have to do it once, but to continue with the system is a piece of nonsense you can only afford if you have money to burn and plenty of time.

Speaking of accountants and the army, I once met a man in the war who in peace-time used to be taken into consultation as an accountant by the big firms in the Rhineland. Now his job was to go round to Army and Divisional Headquarters to check the accounts of the generals. For some reason he had been exempt from conscription before the war, and therefore was conscripted as a private. In addition to the appointment as an expert *revisor* he was promoted lance-corporal. It was a perfect scream to hear him tell his stories about the welcome he had at high quarters before and after they knew what his job was. But he went through the whole of the war as a lance-corporal.

The average officer, who had to give proof of High-School education, encouraged the persecution of the Intellectuals. I wonder why. Herr Hans Johst, later President of the Reichskulturkammer, made a National Socialist in one of his plays say: 'When I hear the word culture, I push back the safety catch of my revolver.' It was the same spirit — *sit venia verbo*.

There was always a remote chance of one day rising high enough to be allowed to make use of one's brains. But it was a hundred to one that there would not be much brains left by the time one became a general.

As I could not make up my mind to take that chance, I began studying the question whether in fact the estate was hopeless as a place to settle down and do something useful. Perhaps it would have been good to do some farming there and at the same time to have Giessen University close at

hand. The prospects for market gardening seemed not too bad. Vegetables were sent by van from Frankfort on the Main for sale in Giessen; there was the popular spa of Bad Nauheim close by and hardly any market gardens in the neighbourhood.

Money was rapidly decreasing in value, though 'inflation' was not yet a household word, and therefore the ordinary citizen had not yet noticed what sort of a disaster was ahead. In the middle of an economically and morally fluctuating world I dreamt of a quiet life, devoted to gardening and philosophy. It seems ridiculous especially in a mere boy of nineteen years, but then I seemed in certain ways to be much older than I am now. The war-strain, doubled by breakdown and revolution, was making itself felt, and usually after a war there is a general longing for quiet and a settled life, which accounts for the inevitable post-war marriage boom.

When I made up my mind to settle down, I had not yet thought seriously of marriage, but incidentally I fell in love while the planning was going on. And after all, why should I not marry? You need a wife badly if you are going to run a garden and there seemed to be no financial obstacle in the way of my having one. So the plan seemed sound both emotionally and economically and everything was fine.

But I overlooked the fact that there was a side to the question which did not seem to mean anything to me at the time, but which still meant a good deal to other people. The social side. *Ebenbürtigkeit* — equality in rank and birth — was very important indeed for aristocrats in Germany, and as all the members of the family alike had the right to the title, it was fairly easy to find an *ebenbürtig* husband or wife.

Aristocracy as such had been abolished in theory by the National Assembly and still is under the present regime. The titles had become part of the common name, as the law says.

At the beginning, ridiculous consequences arose from that law. If a man's title was *Freiherr*, the equivalent of 'Baron', his wife had to call herself *Freiherr* as well, instead of *Freifrau* 'Baroness', as the man's title was supposed to be an unalterable part of the common name. Only when some conservative Member of the Reichstag found out that there was still a law in force allowing subjects with Polish names to use the female form for the women, was the right granted by analogy to the former aristocrats as well.

There were many cases where higher aristocrats had *unebenbürtige* women who formerly had not been entitled to their husbands' rank and who now got the title as a free gift from the Republic — by the law abolishing titles.

In the minor aristocracy there were hardly any special Family Laws regarding *Ebenbürtigkeit*, and intermarriage with commoners frequently took place as long as one condition, which was regarded quite a good substitute for a title, was fulfilled, i.e. if the lady had money.

The girl I happened to want to marry had no title and no money and that was quite inexcusable. Her forefathers had been parsons ever since the Reformation, and scholars before that time. We had met at a meeting of the Hessian *Wander-vögel*.

These meetings were held frequently as a rule during holidays. This one was at Easter and a thousand or more boys and girls from Hesse poured into Giessen for the occasion. They were billeted in the houses of sympathetic families, and incidentally it was my job to sit in an office, telling the new-comers where to go. When all the billets were full up, there came into the room a single girl for whom I had no place left. We had to go and look for one, and that was the beginning. When after a long walk I had put her up with a nice lady and her daughter, I at least knew that I would be sure to find her again at the meeting.

Germans generally have an easy and non-committal way

of making friends with strangers. At least they used to talk confidentially to almost everybody before Herr Hitler made them realize that this sometimes has certain disadvantages. The young people in the Youth Movement were not only Germans but did not look at anybody who belonged to it as a stranger. They addressed each other with the intimate form 'Du' from the very beginning, and started to confide in one another to a degree which other people reach after many years of friendship. You could not help knowing simply everything about somebody you had met an hour before, and you both behaved as if you had known each other from the time of Adam.

The form of the meetings was very much like any other gathering of a similar type. You came together at some open space, if possible a large clearing in the woods, after marching in groups out of town playing your guitars and singing. There the groups mixed to make new friends, to have more singing and dancing, and at nightfall you gathered round a big fire and listened to the speakers, who again and again opened the old arguments about being consciously young, or young on principle, responsible only to your conscience and above all free, free, free. And distrust the intellect, it leads you only into an endless maze; be enthusiastic and emotional and trust your feeling and your instincts, they will lead you to Truth and Beauty.

It is strange how this hostility to the intellect should come from quite different sources: out of a feeling of how insurmountable the difficulties look, when you are left alone in the void with your conscience.

It was easy to fall in love in such surroundings, and easier still to show it. At school we had not been able to see the reason why they banned our *Zupfgeigenhans'l*. We used to pick out the songs which we could appreciate, and we did not bother about the others. But now it was all different. Now they contained the whole scale of soft and tender emotions, jealousy and disappointment and love-making.

The centuries had collected them and made sweet tunes for the words. And then the dances. Many of the German folk-dances are rounds, in which you sing and act the words. 'Lonely here I go and look for the one I love . . . there I see her, here I hold her . . .' and you pick a girl out of the circle and dance with her. You need not always see or show that you see the significance in the words, but you can.

When the meeting closed after three days, the girl who could not find a room and I were in love with each other and knew it. I knew more still, namely that she was in trouble. There was another young man, not present, who with some right considered himself her fiancé. And she did not quite know how to tell him that he was not. When she told me to see her at her parents' place, I knew what was expected of me.

Don't forget, this was in Germany 1919 and the whole story was by no means exceptional.

The other man was one of the young soldiers, and had gone into the war at the age of seventeen. He had been at school at the time. Now he did not know what to do with himself. He had been a hero and awarded the Iron Cross First Class as a volunteer sergeant, which meant something. Now it was expected of him to start learning a trade or any-way to begin at the beginning after already being something. He decided, like many others, to ignore the fact that other standards had now to be used. He tramped through the country, still wearing his Iron Cross on his uniform without badges, visiting friends. As he was an old Wander-vogel, he found friends in every place, who were ready to put him up for a few days or even longer.

That is how he came to meet the parson's daughter. Of course her father did not like the idea of having him for a son-in-law, but the friendly old man had seen a lot of strange things lately, against which there was no remedy other than to pray and to wait and see how the mess would



turn out. Besides, he trusted his daughter, or rather his daughters. He had four of them.

When I met the family for the first time, the young man was not there. But at one of the following visits, he was staying in the parsonage as a guest whom the old parson did not dare to throw out. And his reason was, in short, that you never knew with these demobilized soldiers. There had been an open talk between the two youngsters, and from that it became clear that he had no earthly excuse for staying on there.

My appearance at the parsonage had a most dramatic effect. The young man bluntly declared that if I would not leave immediately and the girl would not consent to an engagement and a public announcement, he would shoot himself on the spot. I told him exactly what I thought of his behaviour, and that it was no business of mine, but asked him if he would please not shoot himself in a parsonage. After all, the scandal was bad enough for the old man without a shooting.

As I did not leave him alone in his room, he wrote parting letters to several people, which he left behind on the table and I felt very ridiculous indeed. It was like a horribly bad film. With studied calmness he donned his military great-coat, and then, drawing a big army revolver out of a pocket, asked me to leave at once, or he would shoot me first. I still did not take the situation seriously and was very annoyed and he changed his mind about the murder. When he went out I followed him.

It was pitch dark outside and he made for the fields. On the way I tried to put some sense into his head, and we walked on and on, until I had lost my way entirely. And then we passed a villager on his way home, who overheard that the parson's guest and another young man were discussing whether there should be murder and suicide or what else. He ran home and woke up the parsonage. In another ten minutes we had the girl, one of her sisters, the parson

and the villager on the scene. When I tried to take his revolver by force but failed, the young soldier ran into the nearest field, there was a discharge, the girl fainted, the villager, for some dark reason, cried out: 'Get under cover, quick', and I walked into the field to see what had happened.

The boy fell against me, covered with blood. The bullet had gone through the left shoulder, smashing the joint badly, and we carried him home. There was no doctor in the village, and after I had applied a bit of first aid I had to go to the nearest town and fetch an unwilling old man who obviously had a strenuous day's work behind him. Then I went back with the doctor, to get a man and a wheeled stretcher to get the wounded man into hospital. After all, the town was about four miles away. It was a lot of trouble, and only finished at dawn. When he was safely in bed, he thanked me very much for 'saving his life', which was quite incorrect, as I think he would never have shot at all had I not dogged his footsteps. I was told he married the nurse afterwards but I have not seen him since.

In the morning there was a great palaver, and the parson could not help seeing that something had to be done about the scandal in the village. So my engagement to the daughter was published immediately, and there was no scandal. After all the villagers too had had some strange experiences lately, and took things calmly. There were many strangers about in those days who did all kinds of things. And the war was lost but there was no peace, and there was a republic and nobody seemed to know exactly what it was.

The real scandal broke out when I had to tell my mother. She knew about the girl already, but now things had taken a slightly dramatic and scandalous turn and I was actually engaged to be married. I cannot blame her for the shock. It must have been a bad one.

My mother had not yet come to look at strange happenings with the philosophical calm of the villagers. After all, it had

not happened in our village, and nobody was likely to hear about it there. But it was not so much the scandal, but the fact that I seriously proposed to marry a penniless commoner.

It was not my mother but rather an uncle of mine, who had been hastily summoned to a family conference, who took a line which was utterly unexpected by myself. I knew that things like that occasionally happened in novels, but the proposal now put forward was unbelievable in real life.

After all, I was a mere boy and in much the same psychological situation as the poor fool who had to pay for his melodramatic behaviour with a stiff shoulder. I had been responsible for my own and for other people's lives and now was struggling to find some sort of a way in a world that was falling to pieces. There had never been any normality around me since I began to look at things consciously.

And now I was asked to decide between two alternatives which would have been astonishing even in a bad and obsolete novel. Either I had to leave the girl — and what young man would have given in to that? or otherwise — they had already arranged to have me taken to a mental home where I would have to stay until the girl was somehow disposed of and the memory of the scandal had faded.

I found it difficult to understand what they were talking about at the beginning, and rather idiotically asked why I should go into a lunatic asylum, as nobody thought I needed it.

No, they were agreed that I was not a mental case, but that was not the point. Professor So-and-so had already agreed to arrange that. He could always certify that I suffered from shell-shock or something, and everything would be all right, if I only were sensible.

It was irresistibly funny to be told to be sensible and go to an asylum, and I could not help laughing. I should not have done that, because they were all profoundly serious, and I

was finally told that my decision was not needed after all. Things would be arranged without my consent.

I hated being melodramatic, but it seems to be extremely difficult not to join in when everybody around you is sounding melodramatic. I asked whether I might go to my room, permission was granted, and I left immediately through the window into the park. My luggage was an army haversack, and now I stood under the night sky, another soldier of the tramping army of boys who could not find out how to fit into a normal life which was not normal at all.

As a matter of fact I was not one of the lost brotherhood by right. They as a rule had the comfort of feeling themselves rebels, and I was far from feeling a romantic hero. I was just extremely annoyed. Yesterday my plan had been to settle down quietly like a good boy, raising vegetables and hoping in my spare time to have a try at philosophy. Now there was no plan; there was nothing but plain melodrama.

The worst of it all was that I simply did not know how to behave in such an utterly unreal and ridiculous situation. But I still could not see how to avoid becoming a character in a penny dreadful. There were all the necessary components, the solemn curse of the outraged family, the threat of being disinherited, and the private nursing home as a private prison for the Prodigal Son. Besides, I could not feel myself a prodigal son, for I had not even had the fun of his debauches, so why should I go and have my dinner with the pigs? And why should I behave like a pathetic character in a bad novel? Only because some people started shooting themselves and others took to cursing their son and heir!

It all seemed to be in very bad taste, and the only obvious thing to do was to go away and wait until it all blew over. But I did not quite know where to go. There was not really any social life after the revolution, you were quite out of contact with people. Many of the families had moved nobody knew where, and there were few new contacts made.

My contemporaries were either in some Volunteer Corps or other, or else looking round for some kind of position, and there was no trustworthy elder relative or friend in the neighbourhood. Besides, I had very little money on me and could hardly venture on longer journeys. It was more than doubtful whether I should be able to replenish my purse at the bank, as I was still a minor and they could easily stop my account.

I started off by taking the main road to Giessen. The last time I had walked this road at night, had been only a few months previously, when I had been staying with a friend in town and had missed the last train. It was well after midnight then when I arrived home, and my mother was sitting up, which was quite contrary to her habits. Actually she had been waiting for me to come home and had been afraid. Had I really been walking all the way all by myself through the night? I had enjoyed the walk very much, as there had been no shells at all and I was not responsible for bringing another twenty chaps through safely, as had happened many times before.

Until I reached the town, my mind was made up to play my part properly. If you have to run away, at least do it properly and stick to the rules established by the authors of adventure stories. So I walked to the next station and spent the rest of the night in a shed, and then mixed with a crowd of workmen taking the morning train to Frankfort. It was the biggest town within reach, and it must be safest to hide there.

The rest, too, was determined beforehand by other people's experiences. Only members of the Youth Movement were likely to take and put up strangers without much questioning. They were compelled to do so without question. I knew some in Frankfort, and I went to see a young architect and his wife.

Five or six people were sitting in the studio, chatting merrily and singing folk-songs. They all seemed to belong to

11, talking the familiar language of the Youth Movement; and the conversation was enriched by the discussion of many subjects and the use of many terms, which were new and unintelligible to me. They called each other 'Du' and by their Christian or pet names, and I just waited for them to retire before having a talk with my hosts. But they did not retire. I was made to play a guitar and to join in the singing and debating, and hour after hour went by. Sometimes we had a kind of meal, people went out for a while, but at midnight they started tossing who was going to sleep on the only couch and who was to have which corner and who which blanket. They all were in the same or a similar position as myself, living with the architect's family.

This was not the only 'refugee-camp' in Frankfort either. I saw many rooms in similar households occupied by similar crowds of people who did not know where to go. Somehow they were all fugitives. Either 'Lefts' from some town or other where one of the private armies had established a kind of 'Right' regime, or 'Rights' from a place where the opposite had happened. And if they had fled from nothing else, they had fled from themselves, the troublesome times or the responsibility which they had now got after having asked for it such a long time. The 'politicals' were quickly absorbed by the spirit of the Movement, i.e. as a rule they took on the habits and customs of the Wander-vögel. I don't know how many among them were just swindlers making use of the situation, but I think there were not very many. However, after the crash of the short-lived Munich 'Soviet Republic', there was a surprising number of 'secretaries to Comrade Toller' amongst them. They came from all classes, and it just depended on their host whether he produced as a special pet a count or a genuine proletarian.

So it was quite a pleasant surprise to find out that mine was not a singular position, and that there had established itself a sort of society and taken a form in which to live when

one has fallen out of what was left of normality in Germany. There is probably nothing so abnormal that it cannot find a kind of shape which can be treated seriously as normal. Our new class, however, was treated as something normal by the outer world. There were many communications with old or newly established circles of society, such as the University or the Press or the political parties. One of the men sharing my refuge was a member of the police, though the force which had given him a field-grey uniform with armlet and badge was in fact a private body of 'Left' men, founded in the early days of the revolution by one of the Kiel sailors. Still they had some official power in the summer of 1919, as the newly established police authority was not firmly enough in power to send them home. As, on the other hand, you never knew when the new police would go and arrest the old one, it was safer for our 'policeman' to stay in hiding.

One thing to be understood is that these people were not 'outcastes', though they must have looked like it to any on-looker from a normal world. You can only become an outcaste if there are established castes from which you are willingly or unwillingly excluded. And for a period there was nothing whatever established in Germany, let alone castes. There were groups which hailed the Republic and the Revolution as the dawn of a new and better day, and groups which condemned the same things as filthy treachery. A deserter from the army was either a criminal or a public hero, according to the circle he moved in. To kill people without public authority was either a crime or a praiseworthy deed, depending on your political opinion, and to do so with authority might have been either or both, according to whether you believed in that particular authority or not. There was no common ground to stand upon and therefore no good and no evil. It was entirely up to yourself to make up your own code of morals and behaviour, and you don't know what that means unless you have lived through it. There was no

crutch left to help the weak and no traditional garment to give you dignity. The face of humanity was laid bare, and contrary to some spectators who claim to have seen it in that state, I say it was not so ugly. After all, there were features in it that gave you much hope, and it was far worse to see them vanish later under an officially approved make-up.

Of course the whole crew in my host's studio took part in the troubles of the new-comer, whether I liked it or not. And after all, why should I reject help and sympathy when I was in a position which was still very embarrassing and puzzling to me? Doubtless they all meant well and it was somewhat comforting to see that they took my penny-dreadful story for something quite normal and just another matter of daily routine.

There was no earthly reason why I should stay in exile indefinitely, so a triumphant return had to be carefully prepared from the beginning. It must have looked strange indeed, this assembly of eight or ten people, old and young, from the most different parts of society, sitting solemnly together and planning wild schemes. There was the architect, never quite knowing how to dispose of his seven-odd feet of height. His deeply furrowed face used to hang over our heads like a Gothic gargoyle, for he always preferred the drawing-table as a safer seat. His wife was a young and sweet German Gretchen but, unlike her type, adorned with innumerable strings of gaudy glass beads, which were fashionable in certain parts of the Youth Movement. The policeman, a model for Dorian Gray, all the more so because though he looked only about nineteen, he must nevertheless have been at least thirty. An old Russian, alleged to have escaped from a P.O.W. Camp during the war, who had been wandering about Germany ever since and had the manners and language of an educated man. We never knew much about him except that he was extremely polite and that the best way of satisfying him was to leave him with plenty of tea alone in his corner, whence he dropped wise remarks



and advice into our conversation. There were two young men, brothers, with smooth black hair and long straight noses, who were supposed to be Serbian princes or at least counts, members of the Spartakus Bund. There was an unpleasant elderly man, devoted to a strange kind of philological research. He was looking for unpublished smutty verses among the literary remains of the great German poets, and checking his sources with extreme exactitude; he found an astonishing lot of them. Luckily he was a visitor only, although a frequent one, and not one of the inmates. We hated his so-called work, and declined to join in his pride and his rejoicing at any new finds, though he always used to stress that his interests were purely scientific. This might have amazed any casual 'neutral' onlooker, who would doubtless have expected less taste in such matters among that crowd. But then, with all normal morals gone to pieces, taste was one of the few remaining founts of our 'civilization'. The term 'in bad taste' was generally used instead of 'immoral'.

It was certainly not regarded as bad taste to live together without being married, but it would have been very bad taste indeed if the two persons were not honestly in love with each other. And his friends would have been as severe judges as any court of law when it came to a question of a man's responsibility towards his unlawful wife.

Casual intercourse between the sexes took place frequently. But then, in a world where home-coming soldiers represented the only stable value and where people used to talk quite a lot about Socialization of Women — though nobody advocated it, least of all the Socialists — there was nobody to be shocked by it and so it immediately lost the lure of secrecy and the glamour of the forbidden fruit. Here the influence of the Youth Movement ideas was strongly at work establishing new rules, carried out no less strictly than the old ones. Remember that according to these ideals you had to live responsible to your conscience only; and since the traditional

values which determined that conscience were rejected, in your search for new values you found a substitute in aestheticism. And, since you distrusted the intellect, you made up your mind to rely on feelings as a guide. The consequence was a society as intolerant as any other in existence, perhaps more so. It was only that the standard values had changed. For a man and a girl to sleep with each other, was regarded as merely a possible consequence in the course of a romance, which might last longer or a shorter length of time. If a child happened to come, they might look at the event as good or bad luck, but in any case they had both to be responsible for the upbringing. Free abortion was much advocated, but more for freedom's sake than for practical use of it — at least in the period shortly after the war, when children were much in demand in these circles. This seems to be a natural law after a war, and the degree to which it operated in Germany at the time may be illustrated by the fact that several times girls asked me to provide them with a child without any obligation on my part. In every case I was old-fashioned enough to decline, which they seemed to find rather impolite, but I know of a number of cases where men fulfilled such wishes and regarded it as a kind of moral duty.

It will be very difficult to give a fair description of what was regarded as intolerable and unpardonable. But there was a certain attitude, which led to a man or a girl's becoming an 'outcast', though the terms to describe the attitude might be misleading; for even in the broadest circles any illegitimate intercourse is termed lascivious, obscene and debauched. But these were precisely the terms applied to a certain art-for-art's-sake attitude in love, which in normal society is not altogether approved but is frequently tolerated as long as nothing is officially known about it. Obscene talk was unthinkable under such circumstances, and prostitutes as an institution were looked upon as 'bad taste' and as individuals they were considered pitiable victims of an immoral age

that was past. What was called 'merely sensual enjoyment' constituted the Mortal Sin.

And, naturally, this state of affairs was helped greatly by the general German attitude of not looking for excuses but of defending odd ideas of new values. As a rule, if a German makes up his mind to do what other people think is wrong, he will never dream of admitting that it might be possible to look at it as a wrong. He will even not find an excuse to make out that it was 'bitter necessity' that made him do it. He will just turn the tables and solemnly declare his action to be the one and only moral action possible. This attitude may be found outside Germany, but it is one of the most basic characteristics of the general mentality of Germany. It is to be found not only in cases of right or wrong, but also in the habit of making almost a religion out of anything. It probably arises out of an inferiority complex, which makes people always look for the most pretentious excuse possible, so that they find theological aspects of rabbit-breeding or bowling. Out of fear of not being taken seriously, the Little Man will never dare to admit that he has had an idea himself, poor soul. He will prove that the highest authority — God or Science — has sent him direct orders to act exactly so.

It is easy to imagine how this kind of people welcomed a victim of Class Prejudice and Obsolete Morals. I entered their circles as an angry boy who did not see why he could not be left alone with his harmless intentions, and I was hailed as a hero. It was irresistible.

The council of war made decisions and we deployed our forces. One of our crowd went to some Left paper where he was on friendly terms with the editors and secured the promise that in case my family tried to carry out their threats, there would be a scandal. After all, this was a republic, and aristocracy was abolished. So far I had not come to realize the direct political significance of my private romance, but now I knew what powerful public forces were ready to defend it. The letter, informing the family about

the unpleasant consequences of putting a junior member into an asylum, was sent to a friend in Hamburg to be posted there. It was written on a sheet of paper with a Munich address at the head, carefully painted over so as to remain just readable. The consequence was exactly as I expected. Private detective agencies in both these cities had a bad time trying unsuccessfully to find me. Meanwhile I underwent the ordeal of being tested by a doctor who certified that I was mentally sane, which took the rest of my money. As the architect had just exhausted his funds as well, we went round the pubs, playing the guitar and singing. I don't know whether this is always a remunerative business, or whether the population of Frankfort is exceptionally open-handed. We usually collected enough to live on in a few hours. The only disadvantage was that we were too often asked to have a drink with the listeners. You can't say that you would prefer cash. I began to sympathize with the parson who had to drink a few gallons of coffee on his rounds. Ours was perhaps even a worse fate.

Meanwhile my family could not find me, but they at least tried to secure my separation from the girl at the other end. They sent the parson of our village to her father, and the old gentleman had a rather bad time as he was held responsible for his daughter. Unfortunately the family's messenger arrived on the very day when the object of his mission, my fiancée, had another visitor. It was a mutual friend of ours, who bore the news of my present circumstances and had tramped down from Frankfort for two days or so just to do me the favour of letting her know. So when the row started, they simply went out together and came back to me. The colony at the architect's had a new member.

The money question became serious and I looked for a job. There were many people without employment but, in fact, nobody at that time spoke about the Problem of the Unemployed and we were not discouraged by daily statistics which so completely paralyse individual efforts to find a job.

I noticed this among unemployed friends in the crisis preceding the Hitler regime. During the years of their doom, and sometimes from the very beginning of their unemployment, they took the attitude of believing that it was at the outset useless to try, as circumstances obviously were such that so and so many millions or hundreds of thousands just could not find employment. This is a merely psychological question and in no way a solution of the problem, but in individual cases it makes all the difference.

## CHAPTER IX

De quoi s'agit-il?

MARSHAL FOCH

My first job was unloading lorries in the big harbour on the river, and quite naturally I came to know a little bit more about the practical side of Socialist politics. Things look quite different when they are real instead of being mere words in the papers. You still find enough people believing that workmen strike out of wickedness or for pleasure and that the Class Struggle is an artificial invention of Herr Marx. There may be different opinions possible as to whether that struggle has to be fought out and must end in the victory of one of the parties or whether there is a way to abolish it. But it can hardly be a useful contribution to the question merely to deny that there is such a thing as Class Struggle.

I soon got to like the work and the kind of life it forced me to lead, for it brought me into close touch with Real Things. Ours was not a complicated masquerade, and if it was a masquerade at all, you could see the reasons for every part of it and in it. Perhaps for the first time in my life, asking 'Why?' was part of the game. Years ago in Weimar I had used to wonder what kind of a play the workmen were acting when they did not serve in the army, and I was surprised, during the war, at the skill of workmen as soldiers — now I learned the simple fact behind these questions. The workman's world is one of extremely naked facts from the very beginning, and these facts are economic ones. He has very little chance of deceiving himself. In other words, if it is part of your normal condition of life that you can lose all

you have any day of your life (and not only 'lose your money') you will soon find out that this fact has more weight than anything other people try to set up as an Independent Value. I came as near this experience as it is possible for one who did not start life as a workman. But though I carried a heritage of 'non-economic values' too deeply in me to be shed, I ought to know something about the part economic security plays in our lives. First I lost my money, then time after time I lost my work, and later I was not spared a loss which we did not dream about in those idyllic Frankfort days — the loss of the right to exist, of the right to starve in any place one chose.

I say all this, though it might seem a truism to many, because I remember only too well how many separate personal experiences were needed to convince me of the simple reason why the working class had to develop Materialism, i.e. Marxism. And it seems to me from what I have seen that there are plenty of people who need telling about that truism. There are few fighters against Marxism who know what they are fighting, and very few indeed who know where and why it was ever invented. This is far from being an explanation, just something to help them to start thinking about it. I doubt whether they will think about it at all, for it is a widespread fashion not to bother to study one's opponent. It concerns almost every party. However, I apologize to any reader who is not in need of elementary lectures.

My fellow-workmen could not fail to discover that I was what they called a bourgeois. Their reactions to that fact were varied. There were those who found a malicious delight in seeing the educated man toil. 'Now you see what real work means.' As if, after so many years in the army, I needed unloading lorries to have that experience. The sneers missed the point, but I knew what they really meant and said nothing. There was the other type expressing the same envy in fawning admiration, which was far more unpleasant. There was the majority, not reacting at all, or at

the most with a comradely grin: 'Bad luck, mate. How do you like it?' They were the ones who used to show me the tricks of handling a heavy load with ease, and as a rule they were organized in one of the two Socialist parties. The sneering and fawning types usually belonged to the Trade Union only because they had to, and were behind-hand with their contributions.

And there was still another kind of reaction. Two or three of the fellows approached me one day and said: 'You are not a romanticist, a bourgeois who does this stupid kind of work for sport. We can see that. So why don't you make use of your knowledge and do something we can't do? There are jobs where you would be more useful.' They got me to take on a position in a Left Book Shop which was just opened as the first of its kind, and later I lectured in a kind of Working Men's College, which was a private institution of the Communist Party. These men belonged to the Spartakus Bund.

There was only a handful of Communists in Frankfort, but their activity was such that they looked as though they were a big party group. The courses were held in the big hall of the Römer, where they used to crown the German Emperors in the time of the Holy Roman Empire. Now the City Council used to let it for lectures. Heaven knows how the rent was scraped together, for the fairy tale about Russian money was unfortunately not true. Sometimes a well-to-do sympathizer saved us, but as a rule the few hundred workmen contributed heroically to keep our lectures going.

Selling books was a very interesting and entertaining job. Besides the ordinary customers, we had many people sneaking into the shop to have a daring look at the terrible Reds, uneasy and thrilled at the same time. I am sorry we had to disappoint them and that we were unable to sell them literature about the Socialization of Women. One of our best-sellers was a small Reclam volume of speeches by Kaiser Wilhelm II. I read it myself when business was quiet, and



could appreciate why it was regarded as a kind of Socialist propaganda book. So far the Kaiser had been only a deep disappointment to me, but now I came to realize how Europe must have looked at the man when these speeches were delivered. There is nothing so enlightening on the question of the notorious war guilt as these utterances of a German Idealist. It may be that these Wagnerian flourishes in ancient Teutonic style, this playing around with ghostly, unreal ideals do no harm as long as they remain the private pleasure of a Little Man. But here they came from what was supposed to be the most responsible position in a Great Power. You may laugh them off when they are dreams of a Babbitt, but it is quite a different matter when the dreamer has the will and the power to force his ideals upon the world. The ideals have partly changed nowadays, but the tune and the key of some Hitlerian speeches are surprisingly similar.

Meanwhile my private war with the family went on. The banking account was still cut off, and the proposal to end the scandal by pretending temporary insanity in an asylum still remained open. I could not help keeping up the melodramatic style by frequent changes of lodgings and the growth of a beard, as I was still afraid of running into some acquaintance or other who might inform my family. I did not believe in the use of this make-up. In fact it smacked too much of the cheap crime-story. But it proved quite effective when one afternoon a customer, after talking half an hour to me, said: 'But I must have met you before.' He certainly had, as he came from Giessen and we had known each other as schoolboys, although only at a distance. But he had been my neighbour in the next bed in hospital immediately before the Revolution, and we used to talk for weeks during the uneventful days. So I told him that I could not remember meeting him, but that it was possible we might have met in the army; you met so many people then. As my intention was to throw him off the most dangerous scent, I continued:

'You have certainly not been in my regiment, perhaps we have seen each other in hospital. I was there once only, in Munich.' It worked better than I had expected. He laughed. 'Now I know of whom you remind me, as you speak of hospitals. But that chap's voice was very like yours. I bet you would like to swap your position with his, he is the son of a nice estate and quite well-to-do.' It was the most difficult task in my part as a disguised fugitive not to die of laughing. Some months later, when I was at last able to drop the paraphernalia of the detective story, I ran into him again and he told me that I had a double in the Communist Bookshop. His face was worth seeing when I told him the truth.

Things began to look quite comfortable; I felt almost normal and settled, and thought it about time to go on with my studies. Obviously I could not just join Frankfort University, as they would certainly ask me to produce papers. Not that it would have been difficult to obtain them. At least, a passport was easy to get. All the waiting rooms of the big main station were crowded with emigrants from Alsace and Lorraine. There they lived, men, women and children with trunks and bundles, some charity organizations looking after them for as long as it was undecided where they were to be settled. All you had to do was to make friends with a couple of the men. For a few drinks or even for the fun of it, they were willing to testify that you had been a neighbour of theirs in the old village. Of course you had to memorize a few dates and names, for there was a cross-examination. But as a rule the people in charge had other things to do besides bothering too much about a single man. You got a temporary identification paper which enabled you to take up lodgings in town. Then you asked at the police station for a passport, which was issued without any questions to any 'resident in the district'. I did not relish adding a real offence against the law to my peculiar situation, but I have seen the trick done by others of our crowd.

Another difficulty was that I did not earn nearly enough to pay the University fees. But on that point I must admit to having been far less scrupulous. To attend lectures out of interest alone with no intention of taking an examination, and paying no fees, was quite a common custom with students. It was called *schinden*. When later I managed to find the time, I went *schinden* with quite a crowded time table, and I hope the lecturers, now almost all in exile, will forgive me.

I found the time only when I was able to leave the bookshop and found another position by accident. The architect and some members of our crowd once took me to a party at the house of the chief editor of an illustrated weekly. It was at the time when I worked in the harbour, and with three inches of beard and my rather grotesque clothes I looked like the genuine article. There was nothing extraordinary in such mixed parties and there was not a single type on earth that you would have been surprised to meet at many a house which would have been regarded as bourgeois in more normal times.

Without further explanation as to who I was, my architect friend asked the host whether he knew of any work for me, and left us. The editor, after learning that I at present was unloading lorries, asked: 'Can you write?' which, the circumstances being what they were, I took to be an inquiry as to whether I was illiterate or not. But of course he spoke about articles for his paper, and producing some photographs encouraged me to try. They were photographs of houses and of a group of men posing for the camera. A few lines on the back stated that some Building Society made experiments with new cheap materials, and I was told to write exactly thirty-five printed lines about economy in building to go with the pictures. I knew nothing about building, very little about economics and I had no idea about how much thirty-five printed lines were. After a brief interview with the architect, which resulted in my acquiring a few professional terms, I settled down in a corner and produced my first article. It

was actually printed without alteration, and I am very sorry that I have not kept it. Since then I have learned that a great many articles are written with not a bit more knowledge of the subject, although perhaps they may be written with more skill.

I continued to write short articles to order, and later this became my profession. When the editor decided to recast a play which he had written, he used to talk to me about it and out of these talks which sometimes amounted to something like improvised rehearsals, still another job was found for me. I became something like a private secretary to him, my duties beginning after business hours. We sat in his office, and shouted dramatic and bloodthirsty phrases at each other — the setting of the play was the Peasants' War in the sixteenth century. Before everybody in the publishing house got to be satisfied about what was going on, more than one night-editor passing our door would come in to hunt for copy on hearing loud shouts: 'You will pay for this with your life' or 'I demand justice!'

It gave a new impulse to my old love for the theatre, and I was glad when my connection with the paper brought me the opportunity to get free seats in the excellent Schauspielhaus. Once when the second critic failed to turn up I hastily produced a review of a minor piece; the accident was the means of my being given still another odd job. The season was perhaps one of the most outstanding in the history of the German stage. We had König, George, Feldhammer, Gerda Müller and Fritta Brod, all at the same time, each of whom made many a theatre famous on their own, in one cast. It was a very lively time on the stage, and the general readiness of the public to acclaim or attack violently the innovations which appeared in rapid succession led to demonstrations of unusual intensity. This was the first time that wider circles became acquainted with what was called Expressionism in Germany, a new school in Art and Literature which was from the beginning identified with Left politics in the mind

of the public. The conservative element was fighting it with sustained and embittered rage.

If it is the artist's birthright to claim a finer feeling for the happenings and undercurrents of his time, and if it is his task to show what can be done with the elements at hand, then there were excellent reasons for the rise of Expressionism. There was nothing but broken pieces and much longing and fighting for new ideals. And that is exactly what the new art was like: the pieces of a ruined world, striving for some kind of new order. Sometimes Expressionism was described as Intellectual, but it was the very contrary, and its effervescent exposure of the dark caverns of the human soul had nothing to do with the dry-as-dust methodical spirit of German 'scientific' Socialism.

The greater part of the people who were whistling and shouting against such playwrights as Fritz von Unruh, belonged to the common type which needs ten years to realize the significance of an event and unfortunately forgets all about it in the meantime. Others declined to believe that there had been a disaster robbing them of their nice old world, a very common neurotic reaction.

As the conservative elements were fighting Expressionism, the Left-wing parties felt compelled to take the suppositious child under their protection, but they were never quite happy about the adoption. As a rule progressive parties collect quite a crowded kindergarten of such illegitimate children. Many of the bourgeois intellectual adherents were in favour of the new art only because of the supposed connection with Socialism. You never knew whether Communism would not after all become presentable in Society, and quite the easiest way to declare your sympathy was by hailing the 'Bolshevist' art.

After the last curtain, a large crowd used to stay in the theatre, clapping and hissing indefatigably in gallant battle against each other, and it was quite common to read at the conclusion of many a review the words 'Police had to clear

the house'. Many people went to every single performance for no other reason than to demonstrate *pro* or *contra*, much to the financial advantage of the Schauspielhaus. Once a leader of the 'Right Wing', a well-known surgeon, carried a pair of forceps with him and threw them on the stage when in a play by Unruh one of the symbolical characters had to say that she was about to have a symbolical child. The audience, having paid for a theatrical performance only, got a mass all-in wrestling match into the bargain.

They were hectic times then, and this may have served as a kind of excuse for such outrages; but there seems to be a general inclination towards disturbances in theatres in Germany. It may be that their strongly developed taste for theatrical effects in real life makes it difficult for them to distinguish between play and reality. Many seem unable ever to outgrow what had been my childhood experiences in Weimar. In the following years, riots in theatres were no less common. But one fact appears strange to anybody not intimately acquainted with the peculiar German type of 'Rightist', and that is that savage forms of protest remained a preserve of the conservative, bourgeois elements. The 'Lefts' just did not buy tickets if there was any danger of being shocked by a 'Right' play. A most sensible attitude, except that in small towns with one theatre no director dared to produce modern or 'Left' plays. There would inevitably have been trouble if he had dared. Nobody would wreck his theatre if he played classics or anti-republican propaganda.

This was, in non-political matters, the replica of the deadly disease of the Republic which in political affairs had granted democratic freedom to those who would use it only to wreck democracy and to abolish freedom.

## CHAPTER X

Attendez-vous que le peuple vous donne la permission de tirer sur lui?

NAPOLEON

THE life I was now leading was an exceedingly normal and quiet one. I had a little furnished room in the house of a professor of the Model School in a suburb, and the day was divided between the University, writing at home and a few hours at the editor's office, which was used as a club by a circle of friends. There we used to meet after lunch, drinking coffee and discussing the latest events in art and literature, not to mention the latest gossip of the familiar, sharp-tongued kind one can hear in Bloomsbury or Chelsea. Our little clique was known by the nickname *Der Meisterkaffee*, and as the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, our host, was then at the best of its tradition we had many interesting guests.

I think that I earned very little money, for when I was asked to send in my income-tax returns, I remember that all I could do was to state that my income had most certainly been irregular and well below the limit of taxation liability. The reply was that 'according to my declaration' I had to pay 63 marks and 47 pfennigs, and I could never find out how they had been able to calculate such an exact amount as a percentage of nothing. Still, they seemed to be satisfied when I paid nothing at all without further reference to their letter. Later I learned about a friend to whom the same thing had happened, and who calmly replied that he would be very glad to receive the sum, and that no doubt the tax-collector's office had inadvertently asked for the amount instead of offering it him. He received a postal order by return. It was all quite easy if you only knew your Germany

of 1919-20 and accordingly used *Alice in Wonderland* as a guide.

By and by I forgot all about my untouchable bank account and was about to forget the hostile family as well. But the family had not forgotten me. Once I had asked a friend of mine to collect some decent clothes for me at the estate. She was a respectable married woman and she was able to display such charming manners that she succeeded in getting what I wanted without being hunted from the ancestral hall, which would have been the thing to expect from the histrionic mood of the family at the time. But they took a letter out of her handbag in order to find out her address and she only noticed the loss in the train on her way back. To her great annoyance a nose young man began hanging round the place where she lived with her husband, asking questions of the maid and following the couple all over town. In a way, they told me, it was thrilling to have their first contact with so romantic a figure as a private detective, but they did not like it too much. The maid had given notice already. So I set about doing something about it. After all, I was leading a respectable life, far more so than most people at that time, and in a case of emergency there were always my various journalist friends to send out the hue and cry if something unpleasant happened to me. So why not go and see my mother at the estate?

There was no fatted calf and I did not expect one, and we conversed very politely, both of us very anxious not to mention anything about the feud. When I asked in the most diplomatic terms that the private detective should be called off, it was flatly denied that one had ever been employed. I said: 'Then please call off the young man who is annoying my friends, whatever he is', and left it at that. The evening mail contained a letter with a Frankfort postmark, addressed to my mother and stamped 'Confidential. Personal'. She retired into the next room with it and came back without it. Under such circumstances I felt myself



entitled to search the room later, and there was the whole correspondence with the Private Detective Institute.

As this is my one and only experience with private sleuths outside a Penguin Book, I shall not generalize, but I wonder whether there are more firms of that kind. These gentlemen took their employer's money for services which I can hardly describe in decent language. There was a long document, describing the activities of one of their men: He had been at the house in question and failed to speak to the maid. He had been unable to find out whether the gentleman looked for was staying there at all. Later a gentleman had left the house, proceeding to the law-courts, where he was tried for assaulting a policeman, but the detective at last succeeded in finding out that he was not the gentleman in question.

The document went on to tell the story of this failure over half a dozen typewritten pages and a nice lump sum was charged at the end. I copied the reports carefully and put them away. Next day I left for Frankfurt without giving my address.

The clerk at the Detective Institute was not surprised to have a caller who wanted to see the Head Manager without giving a name. Such were probably the normal proceedings. A friendly retired-major type saw me in his private office which was, according to German tradition and to the obviously easy ways of the firm of earning their money, spacious and furnished like an early film-producer's dream of a castle hall. I told him politely that I was in the position to give him all the information his employer, Baroness So-and-so, wanted. In accordance with the rules of the game he discreetly denied that he was employed by anyone of that name and so I quoted some of his reports. He became more interested and he asked how I came to know about them and I with an impish joy told him that I had my secrets as well as he. Then I could not help lecturing him about the way he robbed his clients and the worthlessness of his information, which made him wince several times. But he took it like

the man he was. I finished by telling who I was and giving my address, where his sleuths could willingly obtain first-hand information to send to my mother instead of silly lies and stories about shadowing strangers.

He gratefully accepted the proposition and I had the pleasure of meeting one of his young men at my place. The boy was just another of the ex-soldiers floating around in the country until they happened to hit upon any sort of job, determined to leave it again soon. He was very sorry when I told him that the first interview with me would be the last, and that here his easy job of getting his information without effort and with a cup of tea thrown in must end. It did, because the next letter home stopped the expensive nonsense.

I think the family found their latest escapade into detective fiction somewhat embarrassing themselves, and there was hardly any charge against me which could be upheld. So a peace treaty was signed, granting me the right to marry whomsoever I wanted, the bank account was opened again and normal relations re-established.

One of the first meetings with my mother after that was marked by some rather peculiar incidents. One morning I told my landlady that I had to go on a short journey, and would she please say that I should be expected back in a few days in case there were callers. Afterwards I knew that when I told her so, I had no idea about the purpose of that journey, but there was nothing strange in it to my mind when I went to the station and took a ticket for Giessen. It was all quite normal and went without question. In Giessen I missed the last train to the village and arrived on foot at the estate. My mother was not at home, the old house-keeper told me. She had been called to Weimar, since the Thuringian authorities had ordered us to take all the furniture out of our house and to let it at a fixed rate to a retired Prussian general. Unfortunately she had left behind a basket with all the keys of the doors, drawers and cupboards. It would be very practical indeed if I could go to Weimar

immediately as she had not yet written for them and was bound to find the job difficult without the keys. So I had the horses harnessed and caught the night train at Giessen. Arriving in Weimar, I went to an hotel where I had never stayed before, just for a change. I expected my mother to stay with friends. But the next morning I found her at a table in the breakfast room of my hotel. She did not show the slightest sign of surprise. I went to the table in the same matter-of-fact way, thinking that she intended a joke. It was quite natural as we both liked such silly little games. But it was not meant to be a joke. She was not surprised at all to find me in this unusual hotel with the keys, as she had sent a wire to Frankfort, asking me to fetch the basket at the estate and to join her at the hotel in Weimar. I found the telegram at home when I returned, it had arrived a few hours after my departure. I repeat, however, that there was no mystic voice calling me away or directing me into that hotel. It was all quite normal and I acted psychologically in exactly the same way as I should have acted if I had received the wire. Only I had not the faintest idea why I acted in this way, and was not surprised by that fact.

In the early spring of 1920 there was another wave of 'flu and I had to go to hospital. It was a very beautiful building, left to the city by a rich man whose town residence it had been, and surrounded by a large garden. The nurses were obviously picked out to fit the surroundings and as there were not very many patients we had a nice time chatting and playing games with the friendly girls. One morning when the nurse came in to keep me company at breakfast, she chatted away in her usual cheerful manner. 'You're supposed to know something about politics. You are on a paper, aren't you? They tell such funny things about a new government in Berlin, and the old one fled to Stuttgart, and troops coming here . . .'

Strange as it may seem in a man who was supposed to be a journalist, I could not guess what it was all about because

I had not seen a paper for many days and was not particularly interested in the general muddle of politics. As a rule I was far too busy trying to get some idea about the theoretical aims of the parties to bother much about their practical activities. But this news sounded rather serious.

I was getting used to revolutions taking place outside when I was in hospital, and as I seemed to be well enough to have a look at the new one, I went out after breakfast without anybody noticing. Probably the nurse got into trouble for letting me escape, but it did not do me any harm and I herewith apologize.

In town I ran into one of my Communist friends who immediately commandeered my services. The nurse's story was essentially true. Herr Kapp and General von Lüttwitz had established a private government in Berlin, and the Reich government was in Stuttgart. The Social Democrats declared general strike and a Kappist Volunteer Corps was about to occupy Frankfort. The Left parties made up a Committee of Action and a few hours after my leaving the hospital I was sitting in the scarcely lit hall of a restaurant discussing ways and means of resisting the invaders. It was difficult to think about a way as the means were practically non-existent. The call to strike had been answered solidly and there were thousands willing to do anything in defence of the Republic. But there were no weapons, the crowded depots of Russian machine-guns being no more than a fiction of the Rightist papers, and the Social Democrat deputies in the committee already displayed signs of considerable uneasiness when the question arose whether there were any weapons at all. They much preferred having a sub-committee and a delegation to be sent to the commander of the rebel force. Someone asked whether the delegation was expected to hand over the Keys of the City, and whether the City Council would oblige by giving us the keys for that purpose. After this question not much was said by the Social Democrats. Communists and Independent Socialists declared

themselves in favour of armed resistance, but as they were unable to answer the question where the arms were to be got, they became silent as well. So the Committee of Action decided against all action and that was about all it could do.

Two or three battalions of a Volunteer Corps marched into the town the following day and occupied one of the public buildings, I forget which. But it was on a large square and a crowd of working men gathered there spontaneously. Nothing had happened so far and there were rumours that the commander of the troops had been seen by some delegation and questioned about his intentions, and had stated that he was neither Right nor Left but determined to maintain order. 'Maintaining Order' was a well-known slogan for anti-republican activities and whoever the delegates were, the answer did not have a very soothing effect outside. But still nothing happened except that a man climbed a lamp-post and started speaking.

I happened to be standing near by and joined the crowd round the speaker. I did not know him and was more than surprised to hear him call for resistance. Armed resistance at that, and he did it with remarkable oratorical technique and much enthusiasm. I shouted at him. 'You damned idiot, we have no weapons.' And he replied: 'Then we will drag them out of their hiding with our bare fists.' At that moment I did not take it to be anything other than pure lunacy to set unarmed people against an armed stronghold. Instinctively I rushed towards him and pulled him down, shouting: 'How can you justify this nonsense. What party do you belong to?' He answered, 'Social Democrats', which was about the most idiotic excuse he could find, and only then did I realize that I had hit upon an agent-provocateur. I almost laughed, because you don't believe that things happen exactly according to the spelling-book rules unless you see them. The Social Democrats, of all parties! But of course to the Rightist mind they were just bloodthirsty Reds. At the same time I foresaw what would happen if the crowd realized what kind of 'com-

rade' the man was. They could hardly be blamed if they tore him to pieces, and then the Volunteers, only waiting for a pretext to 'establish order', would have their go. So I told him to clear off as quickly as possible before he got into trouble and he made straight for the building from which a group of soldiers came running half-way to meet him. When the soldiers rushed out, the crowd dispersed into the side-streets and only a few came back.

The following day I paid a visit to the architect's family and they told me that just a few minutes before a military patrol had been searching the premises. It was easy to get people you did not like into trouble then. All you had to do was to tell the Volunteers that So-and-so was a Communist and had arms concealed in his rooms. Of course the search had been vain, but after my recent experience I was inclined to believe all sorts of funny reports about certain practices and proposed to search the rooms carefully to see whether there was anything there which had not been there before. The result was that the architect's wife went to town in a great hurry with a shopping-basket and a parcel vanished into the River Main. She had only just got back when the patrol came again, made straight for the big cupboard and were very disappointed not to find the two hand-grenades they had good reason to suppose to be there.

The N.C.O. leading the men did not dare to say a word or to take any action. But the following morning they came again and took the architect off to their headquarters in a suburb. His wife came crying into the office of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and told us the news. She had just received a note from her husband, which the commander had politely sent by an orderly, bidding her farewell, and saying that he would be shot in an hour or so. With the note was a drawing of the room and the people waiting to face the firing-squad, which indicates that the architect was a brave man and a true artist.

One of the editors did some conjuring. He got through to

the rebels on the telephone and told them that he had just been in touch with Berlin. The government of Herr Kapp and General von Lüttwitz was overthrown, and it would be wise not to excute people just now . . . Probably in a few hours the commandant would be very glad if the whole thing were over without bloodshed.

His story was not true. Owing to the general strike there was no telephone connection with Berlin. But it was very effective. The commandant expressed his gratitude and released his prisoners. The story became true soon enough. But when, in consequence of the not very firm attitude of the constitutional government towards the anti-Republicans in general after Herr Kapp's flight, the general strike developed into the founding of a Red Army against the Volunteer Corps, it was by no means clear who was actually in power now. There was fighting in the Ruhr and in Thuringia and Saxony, and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* printed the official bulletins of the Red Army side by side with the bulletins of the government forces. The one doubtful thing was whether the troops called out by the rightful government were Republicans. Actually they were composed of the old Freikorps soldiers and if not in theory they were in practice fighting for substantially the same Right aims that Herr Kapp had been fighting for.

There has been much talk about the Reign of Terror in the towns occupied by the Red Army. All I know about it is the story told me by an uncle who happened to be married in Dusseldorf during the Red occupation. He was an old ex-officer and insisted on going to church in his uniform wearing all his medals. There was only a handful of guests at church and the rest of them vanished very quickly when the old major alighted in full war-paint from the car. This was nothing less than attempted suicide with the Red Army in charge of the town.

The usual crowd gathered at the doors, amongst them Red soldiers, but what happened was only that one of them

pointed out laughingly that the major was wearing a pair of civilian black trousers with his blue and scarlet peace-time tunic, instead of the regulation pattern with red stripes. The man shouted in the manner of a sergeant-major: 'What do you think you are — a blooming civilian? I'll report you to the captain!'

After the wedding-party at the bride's house the couple decided to walk back to the major's hotel as the night was pleasant and cool. The guests implored them not to provoke the Red mob any more, but the major was firm. The streets were absolutely deserted, except for a Red patrol crossing their way and one of the soldiers was heard to say: 'Look, they are coming from a fancy-dress ball.'

Only the next morning the major learned that the man who made the joke had been in the same position as I found myself in the 1917 rising in my garrison. There were posters at the street corners saying that any person seen in the streets after curfew would be shot on sight by the Red Army.

Of course, it would have been more polite of the Red patrol to warn the major that he might meet another patrol in a less jocular mood. So there is at least one authentic Red cruelty I know about.

Only a few weeks after the Volunteer Corps, troops marched again into Frankfort. This time they were French. They behaved exactly as you expect soldiers to behave who have the peculiar task of occupying foreign territory in so-called peace-time, and a territory too where the population is most probably hostile and in which it is rather doubtful who in fact represents the government. They still had all the bombast of victors and had somehow to reconcile the order to behave in a friendly manner with a constant feeling of uncertainty as to probable assaults. A hard task for the average psychology of soldiers. During the first days the troops displayed rather much 'Firm Attitude' and there were a few unpleasant incidents, but nothing serious.

It certainly was a somewhat embarrassing situation.



Generally I found it rather interesting to be able to have a look at the former enemies at close range, but then were they in fact former enemies? After all, this was supposed to be peace and what was their business in Frankfurt? In any case this occupation was more spectacular and less dangerous than the one by the Volunteers and it lasted about five weeks only.

Once you started thinking about the political situation you got dizzy. The old system had broken down, and not only had it been defeated, but the final display of yielding without any resistance and the desertion of its head by no means encouraged the wish to revive it. A revolution was supposed to have taken place, yet the present constitution was not the product of violent changes but of a free election and a huge majority. So, being patriotic or for Germany should have meant being a Republican. Still, a year after the change, the workers fighting against the enemies of the Republic were shot at by the government's troops. And even if they wanted not only to fight the 'Reactionary Forces' but to go on fighting for Socialism — why, they had been promised Socialism and believed that the victorious revolution as well as the National Assembly had agreed on that point. There was supposed to be peace, and a very expensive peace it had been for Germany. But foreign troops went on occupying not only the part of the country which was taken as pawn but just any part they liked. (It was only later that I learned the reason why the French had done it. The papers were not very clear about that and differed widely.)

It is all very easy to say now after almost twenty years, when all these things belong to history, that this description sounds somewhat silly and primitive. But then events had not yet been given a handy interpretation by historians. It was just a disturbing mess of events and feelings and there were only two ways of looking at it: either neglect the better part of the incidents and stick blindly and stubbornly to some opinion or other, or else try to understand what was going on and be shaken to the very roots.

There was nothing stable, safe or self-evident in my world. Every inch of ground to stand on had to be created. There was not only The Most Free Republic of the World as it was called, but for the individual there was the void of absolute freedom. Not everybody was conscious of it but everybody had to live it. Buridan's ass between the two equal bundles of hay might be doomed to starvation, but what could be said of us being asked to create all the possible alluring alternatives out of nothing, and then having to stand in the middle of the indefinite circle which they formed. It is true, not many people saw it like that, but it seems to me that they all acted in this way.

To describe in a simile what a great part of the German people went through, I shall have to choose a rather fantastic image, but it may be important enough to understand what happened to them.

The population of a great city suddenly find themselves on a vast plain of barren earth. The houses have just vanished, and the fact that they are no longer there is so utterly unexpected that it is hard to believe. 'It can't be true. There have always been houses,' is therefore the first reaction of many. They try to behave as if there were still houses. Some say: 'Never mind what happened to the old ones, we shall just have to build new houses.' But there is opposition from people who say that in any case the old buildings must have been bad, or they could not have vanished. The majority just go about as if in a dream. They have never thought about houses. To have them was just an undisputed fact. Now there is a dispute not only about the shape future houses have to take but also about the question whether there should be houses at all. Someone is heard to say: 'I have always been against houses.' So a crowd gathers round him as he is supposed to have some opinion about buildings. Maybe he is responsible for the miracle and he might know what to do now.

Many years later I happened to be present at the fall of

another Established Order, I mean the monarchy in Spain. But there a people had been fighting against that order and was victorious. Most Germans got their Republic as a free gift and were for it mostly because they had been disappointed and deserted by the Established Order. Only one side of the new liberty appealed strongly to all of them. They had always been inclined to form sects, programmatic associations and groups. Now as nobody seemed to know what had to be done and all ideas had the chance of becoming the future Leading Idea which everyone was crying out for, all the private religions and *Weltanschauungen* were promoted to the rank of serious candidates in the struggle for the future shape of Society. Never before had there been such a good time for prophets and hardly any country has as many or such fanatical prophets as Germany.

As a rule the German quack believes fiercely in his own medicine. There have been only very few cases of false prophets who were not in the least convinced themselves that their specific ideas were necessary for the salvation of mankind. The cool-headed crook making up a fancy religion for the sake of his own pocket is not a German type. On the contrary, the special breed in that country will always score several points at the beginning of every dispute by the undeniable fact that he is full of the best intentions. In many cases it is very difficult to bring home the fact that such goodwill is more dangerous than good honest swindling, which at least you can fight straightforwardly.

At the University I had a friend, a student of Theology, who came from the Youth Movement. He was devoted to his studies, but they led him to a peculiar type of aesthetic atheism. This was of course his private affair, but I was somewhat surprised to find him later as a priest in the church of a Protestant village. When I happened to run into him he asked me to come to his service, which he held strictly according to the rules of his church. There was no sermon on that occasion. Later when he gave me supper in the

parsonage, I could not suppress the remark: 'You seem to have changed, old man.' His firm reply was: 'Not in the least.' Then he explained, that he did not believe in anything he was doing in his church. He looked at the doctrine as something childish and almost criminal. But, he said, people were in the habit of going to church and expected the Truth to be preached from the pulpit. So, being convinced that his was *The Truth*, he gave them everything they expected from a pastor, in order to gain their confidence, and in his sermons preached his own ideas which were contrary to the teachings of his church. 'My villagers are simple people,' he said, 'they will not criticize what I tell them. If it comes from their parson it must be gospel-true.'

I thought that was rather a dirty trick, but you can't tell that to a parson across his own table. So I only asked: 'But don't you feel like an agent of a foreign power in disguise?' He accepted the simile eagerly: 'I do, and I am as proud as such an agent would be when his work is successful.' He was so absolutely convinced of the truth of his private opinion and of the value of his teachings that it meant nothing to him to break all the rules which are supposed to go to make up decency in a clergyman. There is one excuse for him to be found in the fact that his church did not bother much about what teachings came from their pulpits. They were confessedly liberal but I doubt if their liberality would have gone as far as tolerating a man who was in no sense whatever a Christian had they but known.

Probably that man did not do too much harm, as the kind of congregation who go to church because it is done and without any inclination to criticism will as a rule pay no attention to the sermon anyway. He might have preached devil-worship to them without making them better devil-worshippers than they were Christians before, i.e. no Christians at all. But his attitude was typical of a certain state of mind so frequently to be found in Germany. Amateur Philosophy has always been a very popular sport there, and nobody is more apt to be

proud of a small measure of achievement than the amateur. That is why the prophets of small sects and petty political groups are fanatical and intolerant and ready to go to the bitter end when their half-digested teachings clash with reality.

The same thing accounts for the incredible number of political parties trying to get their representatives into parliament. One should not forget that there was another score or so besides the over thirty already represented in the Reichstag. And nobody knows how many there were that never came as far as to be known at all in public life. An outstanding figure amongst the 'Party Leaders' who never got into the Reichstag but on whom some ten thousand votes were always wasted was, for instance, Herr Haeusser, who was one of the sights of Berlin. His programme I was not able to understand after reading his party paper. But as he used to go about the streets carrying the old Imperial flag it must have been a 'Right' one in some sense, and his hair a yard long and his beard indicated some 'Back to Nature' inclinations. It is a pity he never came into parliament where he would have added a picturesque note and where his flag might have come in handy in the hand-to-hand fighting which became customary in that assembly.

I wonder whether it would not have been a good idea to have a Marble Arch corner in every German town, where people could have got rid of their private complexes without necessarily being driven to form a party in order to get a platform. It would, however, have needed the whole expanse of Hyde Park to provide room for all the prophets.

The Communists abstained at first from voting for parliament, a consistent and becoming attitude for an anti-parliamentary party. It did neither them nor the Reichstag much good when later they changed their minds.

The influence of the Youth Movement, or what was left of it after the war, was never exercised through parliament. Nevertheless, there were direct influences to be found. When

for instance almost immediately after the Revolution a good deal was done to reform the schools, this was perhaps entirely due to the Youth Movement. They were more or less the only people who had ever given any thought to the question of reforming education. Now, when with the break-down of the old state the school-system seemed to have crashed as well and the children refused to recognize the old authority any more, those concerned had to look for guidance and help from those who had any opinion at all about The School of the Future. In Hesse there was for example a private Reform school which I had visited once. It was run on about the same lines as Herr Wyneken's famous Wickersdorf. All subjects were optional, attending classes not compulsory, and the whole institution was run by the School Community where children, teachers and technical staff had equal votes. As soon as the Revolution broke out, children of that school went round the whole of Hesse preaching their system, and in many places it was introduced immediately and without much argument. In fact the School Community was a legal feature, I believe, at least for some years, of the whole German educational system. Only its original meaning was corrupted and as good as abolished by the ways later school-directors made use of the new laws. But still, as much or as little as was done about new ways in education came entirely out of the Movement's stock of ideas.

There were a few more direct effects, but the body of the Youth Movement preferred to form minute groups of their own like the Free Community of Craftsmen or the *Siedlungen*, thus adding to the number of ideological crystallizations which could not be absorbed by the political parties.

As the Germans had been provided with a Republic without much asking and almost without struggling for it, one could not be over-surprised when they did not know how to run it. All the blowing-up of private pet ideas to the size of political programmes and the whole way Parliamentarism was handled show clearly enough that there never was a

real Democracy at all. From the beginning it was never understood properly that Liberty is not a means but an end. As it is, or should be, realized in countries with a Democratic tradition, Democracy does not simply mean a system of outvoting minorities or of giving the enemies of Liberty a nice legal means of doing away with Liberty. Democracy should provide the common basis on which to work together and even to fight out struggles. In the Weimar Republic there was no common basis to be found, but a lot of helpless people and ideologies, using the free gift of the Democratic system as a means towards absolute power. For the student of German Parliamentarism it was not very difficult to prophesy that at some time the end would be the survival of one party alone. There was always one 'Democratic' party only, the Catholic Centre Party, ready on principle to work with any of the other parties as long as certain cultural interests of the Church were guaranteed. The rest, in spite of casual groupings and declarations, tended towards absolute power.

## CHAPTER XI

Coelum non animam mutant qui trans mare currunt.

HORACE

ALTHOUGH my life in Frankfort became more and more that of a normal citizen and useful member of society, it was not very satisfactory. In a vague way the general uncertainty, the somewhat hectic swing from one extreme to another became a strain. Visitors from outside might have had a very simple formula and called the way we used to live abnormal. But even the most abnormal exception becomes a normality, *your* normality, when you live long enough in it. All that is may perhaps not be good, but it just is, and you cannot doubt it for very long.

It never occurred to me that the world outside Germany might have a somewhat different aspect. What had happened in that country had changed our world, and you cannot help thinking that that means The World. Still, sometimes I wondered whether there might not be an escape from the general muddle, if only to be able to view at a correct distance. If I had been a Catholic I should probably have gone into a monastery.

I carried on with journalism for no better reason than that I had been writing articles and reviews for a time which seemed incredibly long. By now it took all my time and I no longer went to the University. I doubt whether I should have gone had there been time. My private studies were restricted to Hebrew and some reading at home.

Two incidents coincided: the paper asked me to become sub-editor and my sister asked me to come with my mother to the Dutch East Indies to see her. She had been married before the war and had gone to Sumatra. Now she was in Java where her husband was running a private hospital.



The choice was not difficult. The prospect of making my present occupation a permanent one was not very stimulating and, after all, there was always time to become a sub-editor if I wanted to be one. And as my fiancée and I had some time previously agreed to break off our engagement there was not much to hold me in Europe. Perhaps Java was even far enough away to find rest for a bit of quiet work.

I took a few weeks' holiday and went up to the hills of the Vogelsberg where I helped a friend to build a log-house. She was a widow with a seventeen-year-old daughter, and besides myself there were two more young men in the camp. We did the whole job ourselves, from designing and the wood-cutting on the spot to making the furniture, and ever since, house planning and designing have become my favourite hobby and I never give up cherishing the hope that one day I shall be able to build my own cottage and share in the making of everything as completely as then in the Vogelsberg. Several times I came pretty near to the realization of that dream, in Germany and in Spain, but usually some kind of political violence made it impossible in the end.

More than a year and a half had passed since the armistice, and in spite of the generally unsettled state of affairs in Germany I had become accustomed to the idea that our life was a more or less normal one. Besides, I did not know much outside my post-Revolution experiences, as the memories of childhood are concerned mostly with things very different from our later interests. I remember now that I did expect to find some difference but certainly not so utterly foreign a world as the one which opened immediately after crossing the Dutch frontier.

There had been some difficulties about the amount of money we wanted to take with us, and this was my first contact with the newly invented crime of *Devisen-Verbrechen*. It is hard to understand when you are told for the first time that it is an offence to take your own money with you somewhere. Nowadays we have got used to it, but then these

restrictions were simply looked at as ridiculous and tantalizing. Why on earth were we allowed to take as much money as we liked with us in Dutch guilders, which you could buy up to any amount at a bank in Germany, but were forbidden to change our marks into guilders at the frontier when we learned that only a few hundred marks were allowed to be taken across? At the time when these restrictions were new, only an expert in economics who had specialized in monetary theory was able to understand the laws. Even the German customs officer could not help understanding the situation we were in better than he understood his regulations, and he let us pass with at least enough to proceed to Rotterdam and then to fetch our Dutch money from Amsterdam. It could not be sent from Amsterdam to Rotterdam because the Post Office was on strike.

We were in two minds and we discussed the question whether we should tip the customs officer or not. He had certainly broken regulations in order to help us, but then you had frequently to break regulations in Germany these days. There were many too many and it was not long ago that you hadn't been able to know whether the authority issuing them was really the right kind of authority. Meanwhile the man came back to our compartment twice to ask if we were comfortable, which I took for a sign that he expected some token of gratitude, but the train left before we had settled our argument and he was left behind without tip or bribe.

Then we were in Holland. Neat and clean Holland, flowing with milk and honey, peaceful and normal. Probably the Dutchmen had their own ideas about the degree to which the war had afflicted their country, but to me it was like coming to a foreign planet where they had never so much as heard the word war.

It was in the air and it is impossible to describe it. Only a few things I remember as outstandingly different, the good clothes people were wearing instead of the many converted uniforms which were seen in German streets,

the taste of real butter and real creamy milk, forgotten since childhood, and above all the different way people looked at you and spoke to you or to each other.

It was in the pleasant smile of the buxom girl in spotless white apron serving in the Melkinrichting, which you got into the bargain. It was in the polite civility of the policeman trying to speak German when he noticed our inability to speak his native tongue.

The girl and the policeman were just performing their ordinary routine to the best of their ability, which included the ability to show a little friendliness. And it was all very normal, and not in the least problematic. In Germany they would have looked at you as if they were not quite sure whether there should be policemen or dairymaids at all and as if you were properly expected to discuss the question first. There was a good deal of laughter in Germany but no smiles. A laughter that said: 'I know that you are exactly as frightened as I am. But don't you dare to know the same of me. I'm not frightened — see?'

For the first time I boarded a liner, and it seemed to me to be very big, though the *Goentoer* was only a small boat. I expected to find my luggage in the cabin and rang the bell when it was not there. A pretty brown boy entered, in a white uniform with turban-like head-cloth and asked: 'Apa toean minta?' The stewards were all Javanese and spoke only Malay apart from their much more difficult native language. There was nothing to be done but to learn two languages.

Coming down for dinner rather early I was surprised to find that I seemed to be the only man to have dressed. To my relief, a group of five gentlemen in dinner-jackets later occupied one table at the other end of the room. The ship's doctor at our table, who obviously knew all about drinks, seemed to know all about the passengers as well and told me they were English.

The Dutch seem to share the German habit of introducing themselves immediately to all strangers and I had to murmur

my name scores of times after dinner. It always struck me as a funny habit, as you are never able to understand the name properly and as a rule forget the little you have understood. The five Englishmen seemed to do in Rome as the Romans did; I could see them going round and shaking hands like all the rest.

I must confess that the situation was slightly embarrassing, and I said so to the merry old doctor. It was my first social meeting with Former Enemies since the war. How did you behave in such a case? My private feelings were simple enough. I would have liked to meet these people who could provide first-hand information about what the war looked like from the British trenches. Besides they were much less foreign to me than the Dutchmen and I understood their language. And silly as it may seem, the fact that they were the only ones to dress for dinner formed a kind of natural link.

But which party should make the first move? They seemed to feel much the same way and to avoid me. At least they were the only people I did not meet the first evening.

Probably the doctor acted as intermediary, and the following day one of the Englishmen, a Captain Turvey, found some tactful way of introducing himself and carried me off to the British table. It seems to be a cast-iron rule that a ship's-friendship does not last after the journey is over, but I should be very glad to meet these men again. I only remember two more of them by name, the Scotman Hutchinson and a Mr. Smith who was, I believe, a director of the British-American Tobacco Company. They had certainly to expend a considerable amount of tact and patience not to treat me as an absolute fool and bore.

I certainly felt like one, and at the beginning I felt very much older — heavy, slow and full of problems — than these men who were a few years older than myself. They were just the first normal people I had met since I was grown up.

We did not touch on the subject of war in our conversation, but one day Mr. Turvey casually spoke about his handicap

at a jumping competition we were engaged in on deck, showing a large scar on his calf. I asked: 'Where did you get that?' and in consequence we found out that he had been wounded exactly opposite my battalion. But it had been a shell he had tried to stop and I was a machine-gunner at that time, so we had every reason to drink to the fact that we had left each other alive and unhurt. This was the first one of these cases; the latest one was when I found out that I very nearly took my present London landlord prisoner.

There were only a few Germans on board. One was the pianist Friedenthal who sat at our table, a great musician who had been forced by the financial situation in Germany to go once more on a world tour in spite of his age. Incidentally his grand piano travelled back with my boat when I went back to Europe in the following year. He had died in Java. Then there was a motor-car dealer, German by passport, but who had become entirely Dutch, and a civil engineer who was certainly and truly German.

It was the engineer who gave me the first impression of a certain type of German outside Germany.

We stopped only a few hours in Port Said and a British official came on board to visa the passports. His instructions were not to let German passengers on shore, and we were asked to see him. When we had assembled, he told us in a very polite way, that he unfortunately could not visa our passports, and would we be kind enough to leave them in his care as long as the ship was in Port Said. It would give the 'neutral' passengers more time, as it would spare him the trouble of putting a stamp on their passports. We all could not help seeing the advantage of this arrangement, and surrendered our papers. The civil engineer alone declined. He was not going to give his passport to any Englishman, he declared, and here on Dutch territory it would be less likely still. The official tried to take his refusal as a misunderstanding, and patiently declared that he certainly had no right to ask for the German's passport, but it would save so much

time for our Dutch hosts if he could have the papers for the few hours.

Meanwhile the other passengers became impatient. Why could they not go on shore? Somebody told them that one of the Germans was the culprit, and they grew rather angry when the officer had to give the case up and started stamping the neutral passports. A very dignified old Dutch planter tried again to persuade the engineer not to curtail the other passengers' time on shore unnecessarily, but got an answer which made even him lose his temper, and a fight started. I happened to be present and it was more than I was prepared to stand. The engineer was several years older than I was, but I got in between and told him exactly what I thought of his way of displaying German dignity at the expense of the Dutch who after all were our hosts. It worked, as it will always work, to treat this kind of people after their own measure, and the last German passport was surrendered.

The British official told me later the reason why we were not allowed to land. There had been no such restriction before, but when the first Germans went on shore in Port Said after the war, there was a cheering crowd of anti-British demonstrators on the quay, provided carefully beforehand. I could not help seeing the authorities' point that they did not care to have this happen again, though I was very disappointed not to be able to see my first oriental town from nearer than on board ship. As a matter of course the beauty of Colombo as well was only to be admired from afar by 'enemy' passengers, and on the way back it was Gibraltar where I had to stay on board when all the others went on shore.

It is definitely annoying if you can see the reason for such a restriction, but at the same time are clearly aware of the fact that there is no earthly reason why they should be applied to you except for the technical difficulty of finding out whether they fit your case or not.

Towards the end of our journey I restored the somewhat

spoilt relations with the German engineer, and he used to lecture me about the practical tricks of life abroad. He had been in Siam at the outbreak of the war, and being an officer in the reserve had reported immediately to the German consul when he learned about the mobilization. 'What do you think that chap told me, when I asked him what my orders were? He said: "I'm not your nurse, or am I?"' This was not exactly what you expected from your consul, I agreed, and received the good advice: 'Never go to see the German consul when you are in a mess if you can help it. He will always tell you that he has no official power and there the matter rests. Go to the British consul. He hasn't any official power to help you either, but he will do something without official fuss and you will be all right.'

Later I had the opportunity, and more than once, to check the truth of this statement, but it amused me that the advice came from the anti-British engineer of all people. The case is not as strange as it seems at first sight, and at least it is by no means uncommon. On the contrary, anti-British feeling, more widespread in Germany than is generally believed, has its origins in feelings of love and admiration. This engineer for instance certainly did not nurse a grudge against the British as Victorious Enemies. I am sure he had been a good soldier, and good soldiers don't feel that way. With him it was hatred, blind, stark hatred; which is always the reverse of love.

The Germans are not a nation. They want to be one, but Goethe has already told them that this was an idle dream which would never come true. There is no European country where the population is more mixed, and the strongest influence does not come from any Germanic part but from the Eastern Slavonic one. East of the river Elbe, where Pruzzish, Sorbish and Wendish tribes, with a liberal mixture from the invading Huns, were conquered and civilized by Germanic victors, the dream-image of the tall, fair and strong *Herrenmensch* was born.

It is significant, that in all periods the cry for the predominance of the Nordic *Herrenmensch* arose from the ranks of people not belonging to the type which they wanted to make the ruling one. (The shortest formula for that fact is the contemporary joke that the Nordic Man should be as tall as Goebbels, as slender as Goering, and as fair as Hitler.)

If the worshipped type, adorned with all the distinctions of body and mind attributed to the *Herrenmensch*, existed at all, it was in England, and Great Britain was supposed to be the political embodiment of that dream. It is easy to check in German literature and even in personal interviews (if you know how to get it out of people) that Our Cousin Across The Channel was the envied Elder Brother who has got all the things the younger one wants and has not got. It was not so much the actual possessions, wealth, colonies, the Navy. These things were usually brought forward as symbols for the unmentionable real objects of envy: the careless, easy way of Being British without falling into a convulsive patriotism, the secret of dressing well without showing off, and of wearing a dress-suit with the same matter-of-fact lack of concern as one does a dirty bush-tunic, the knowledge of how to reconcile tradition and progress, the practical sense to rule big countries and to run big business, the apparently slack and easy diplomatic practice which usually wins in the long run, and last but not least the week-end, glorious symbol of a nation which wants to know what it is working for.

I will not insist that every German is conscious of this attitude in his mind, nor that every Britisher embodies the dream-image painted above. But the extreme alone is the typical. You measure the altitude of a mountain at the summit and there is not much difference between all the mountains at the point where they are broadest. The reason why I have an eye for that queer love-hatred where I come across it amongst Germans is probably that the little bit of



genuine British tradition in our family made me immune to the disease and made it a natural thing to like British people and their ways without playing the part of the jealous little cousin.

I set foot on land for the first time since leaving Rotterdam in Padang, a small harbour at the west coast of Sumatra. We came into the little bay early in the morning. Enormous birds spread rusty-red wings across a sky of polished brass and an outrageous vegetation boiled over the brim of the shores into a purple sea. From behind the green curtain of the bush came the soft throbbing of a wooden drum, a symmetrical curve of rhythm like heart-beats quickened by a deeper breath and calming down again. A native watchman giving the All's Well.

The following morning I awoke in the house of friends in Buitenzorg, a suburb of Batavia. Golden sunbeams darted through the green window-shutters and some birds outside made a cheerful noise like a host of sparrows. It was very much like awaking at the estate at home but for the mosquito net and the faint, sweetish musty smell so characteristic of the tropics. But for the first time I fully realized the feeling of being far away. Far from everything, Europe and its troubles, the German problems, my own worries, I tasted thoroughly the relaxation of an accused man just relieved from torture and acquitted. I had not been aware of how bad in fact the last years had been.

The feeling lasted through the whole of my stay, and the Javanese setting of the interlude was a perfect one for a play of contentment and happiness. Only I was too young to appreciate happiness and contentment. I was deeply in love with the country, but it was a sailor's love-affair with the knowledge at the back of my mind that I should have to leave soon. I had to go back to Europe if only to gratify my curiosity about what strange new formations would crystallize in the melting-pot.

I am one of the few who have not written a book on Java

or Bali, and what I know about the islands does not belong to this one, although the fact that I met with racial laws for the first time there might be of some significance. There is a racial question there and the Dutch have their own system of dealing with it. They have three different kinds of civil and penal codes of law, one for Europeans, one for 'Inlanders' and one for Foreign Orientals. All children who can prove that their father was a European by law, belong to the first category. Some tribes, converted to Christianity during the Portuguese colonization, are legally a kind of Honorary Europeans as well. There are certain circles agitating against the Half-Castes in much the same spirit as, and with similar means to, those of anti-Semites in Europe, but it did not seem to be a very popular movement.

Somebody mentioned one day that there was a new-comer in Soerabaja, a German lady of strange appearance and of foreign habits. She had her hair bobbed, which was in those days an unheard-of thing in Java, played the guitar, and intended to introduce art-craft pottery. To the initiated these were clear symptoms: I went to see her and had the pleasure of having my suspicion verified. She belonged to the Youth Movement and we had many common friends. Besides the guitar she used to play the violin, but found that her technique had suffered from the change of climate. It was not the climate but a slight mistake she had made when purchasing a new bow in Soerabaja. It was a 'cello bow, twice as heavy as one for the violin. Later a fairly reliable reporter told me in Berlin that he had met the same lady as a Buddhist nun in Colombo. Her career must have been in the true style of the Youth Movement. She was an intelligent person, very determined and certainly able to come to a decision upon anything out-of-the-way once she believed it to be the right thing.

The evening before my departure I spent with friends in Batavia, and when they retired for the usual siesta, I went for a solitary stroll in order not to lose a single hour and

to purchase some books. So I stumbled upon a German book-shop and had a look at the window. Apart from the cheapest kind of novels, it displayed exclusively military and nationalist books, and I went in to see whether there was something more suitable for reading on board. The young man inside did not speak Dutch, and I offered to talk German to him, for which he was grateful. After the German fashion he mentioned his name, which, as usual, I did not understand. He said that he had only just arrived from Europe, incidentally on the same boat I was going to take on the following day, and that he was glad to have this position in Batavia. 'The gentlemen in the German Club have been very nice and helpful indeed. You know, there was a political reason why I had to leave Germany. They appreciate that.'

On board ship I got on friendly terms with the radio officer who was a German, a very jolly type of adventurer, who had taken the job simply to see the world. By rights he was a Historian of Literature. Once I told him that I had met a not very pleasant young man in the German book-shop in Batavia who must have been on board when the *Riouw* was outward bound. He laughed: 'Have you seen that pet! He gave us a lot of trouble, standing drinks all day which in the end he could not pay for and the better part of the night. But the German Club redeemed him in Batavia, he had a great welcome there.' I asked: 'Do you know who he was? He spoke about political reasons.' 'Didn't you know?' said the radio officer. 'He's the man who murdered Liebknecht.'

On the German side of the frontier my luggage was examined by Belgian customs officers, assisted by soldiers. They threw the things belonging to a man next to me all over the place, because he protested against foreign interference. I did not think that the Belgian did it for his private pleasure; when he asked me to open my trunks, I was treated exactly as politely as I treated him.

Then I had breakfast in the restaurant-car, and not having yet had much experience in such matters, I asked the waiter whether he could accept Dutch money. He said he could, and I gave him the equivalent of half a crown. The change amounted to about what I believed to be the yearly revenue of my German account. During my stay in the East the full swing of the inflation had set in without my knowing. I had left the account in the charge of the manager and had no reports forwarded as money was anyway too difficult to transfer. So when the waiter started unloading thousands and thousands of German marks, I honestly doubted his sanity.

If conditions had been unsettled in Germany when I had left, they now were rapidly approaching the state of a mad-house. There was this difference, that people had in the meantime got more used to such conditions. They were less overcharged with dark problems and more apt to make the best of the crazy world round them.

When I came home, I had only about thirty guilders left in Dutch money, and I spent them with two of my friends on a journey. The three of us left Giessen by train, travelling first class. In Weimar I had a look at our house. The Prussian general who had been forced upon us as a tenant had moved out in the meantime. The keys were with an agent, and another party was about to be billeted in the house. We were supposed to keep it in good repair, to pay the rates and taxes, and to collect the rent which almost covered these expenses. But we thought ourselves lucky to get a general. We might easily have been told to take in half a dozen families at two rooms each.

Perhaps half a dozen families would have been better. The general, left to himself, had the fir-trees in the garden cut down, probably for firewood. He was obviously under the impression that this was just another soldier's billet, and behaved accordingly. I wonder how he succeeded in breaking the Dutch tiles in the kitchen; they were pretty strong. Perhaps it was done with hand-grenades. However,

the rest of the house was still standing, and it took a great deal to surprise us in those days.

My friends and I stayed a few days, hiking on the roads where as a child I had gone on long walks with my father, and, following a whim, one day we took a car to Jena, in order to get the night-express to Munich. There we saw a few plays in one of the many little theatres run by workers' associations, which grew like mushrooms in those years. We lived in the Vier Jahreszeiten, a well-known and not exactly cheap hotel, and later took a plane to Nuremberg.

The air-service was something new, and had very few passengers. The machines were old army planes; very little effort had been made to convert them. As we went on board my friend stepped through the wing, but the pilot said that it did not matter. The whole thing was rotten anyway. There were only open cockpits and we were given heavy flying-kits, helmets and goggles.

In Nuremberg we were welcomed like ruling monarchs. Passengers were still a sensation. The head of the air-field, attired in correct morning dress, obliged by taking our luggage out in person. He was slightly surprised to see that all we had was rucksacks, and very embarrassed when we took off the Company's fur coats. Our shorts and old coats did not correspond with his conception of people using this rare and expensive means of transport. How could he know that it was all done with thirty Dutch guilders?

After seeing the sights in Nuremberg, we went to Halle on the Saale to see some friends. A Communist rising was just on, and the big industrial works of Leuna were besieged by the police. There were no posters about curfew being imposed in Halle, and therefore we were rather surprised to be shot at when we left our friend's place. I must admit that we were slightly under the influence of drink, which accounts for the fact that we did not remember having been challenged correctly before the policemen opened fire. Very suitably this happened near a churchyard

and we hopped over the wall extraordinarily quickly. Breaking all rules of the art of war, the enemy did not follow up our retreat, but, after all, they may have thought that you cannot chase anybody farther than a churchyard. So we sat down, exhausted, on a grave and, prompted by the shooting experience, exchanged war stories until we fell asleep. When we awoke a few hours later it was very cold and we were very sober. So sober, in fact, that for the first time we counted how much there was left of the thirty guilders. There was just enough to get fourth-class tickets in a slow train back to Hesse. The last twenty-odd miles we tramped home, so as not to spoil the scheme by wiring for money.

## CHAPTER XII

Bursche lass was flattern, wehen!  
Tu' mir doch nicht so gesetzt!  
Bissel stürmisch muss es gehen  
Soll was Tüchtiges geschehen —  
Tu't was, was die Welt entsetzt!  
Tu't nicht so vereist!  
Glut ist Geist!

Leaflet of the *Neue Schar*

EXPERIMENTING how far thirty guilders would carry three men through Germany in 1921 had been very good fun for the three weeks or so that it lasted. But apart from that, the journey led us into one of the strangest experiences one could ever have.

What we were to see during our stay in Thuringia, was only the after-effects of an incident which had just shaken that country to its very roots. People talked about it just as you talk about a dream you want to get out of your head by telling someone about it. Others denied having been in Thuringia at the time in question; you could see on their disturbed and embarrassed faces that they were not telling the truth. They were ashamed to admit that they, too, had been in the grip of the miracle. Complete strangers confided in us, whispering: 'He will come back. One day he will come back.' One of them was a clerk in a travel bureau, another a policeman.

For Thuringia had just witnessed the outbreak of the Millennium. For weeks and months the whole country had been under a strange spell and thrown back into the Middle Ages. One man had succeeded, at least for a short time, in overthrowing all the established categories of the existing political and religious systems. He was not backed by any

party or church and he had almost no programme. He was not an acknowledged leader in any part of the Youth Movement, but these were the circles from which he came. If there ever was a born Leader, in the sense of a man who without any effort embodies in himself the feelings and the spirit of a group, it was this man, Muck Lamberty. He represented most typically the Youth Movement, which means representing the most typical part of the German mentality.

(It might be necessary in this age of muddled terminology to say that 'typical' has nothing at all to do with 'the average'. The typical part of a group's mentality is the factor which distinguishes the group from other ones. It might form a larger or smaller part of the make-up of the average individual of the group.)

Muck Lamberty. I met him once, shortly before I left for the Dutch East. There had been a Wandervogel meeting in one of the picturesque old towns of Hesse. After the usual disputes, the dancing and singing, all the boys and girls gathered round the fire on top of a hill. It was a crowd rather different from the pre-war ones. Then the Wandervogel had been an essentially bourgeois movement, young bourgeois rebels attending schools and universities revolted against their own class in their spare time. Now not only had the first proletarian elements found their way to the movement, but a new type had arisen out of the disturbances of war and revolution: the full-time Wandervogel. Young soldiers of the Lost Generation, tramping about in the country, with gaudy, open-necked shirts under military tunics, and military trousers cut down to shorts. Young girls, who had run away from their families to follow the call of 'a better, worthier life' or just because of a longing for romanticism and adventure. One thing they all had in common: the unconditional determination to put up with all the hardships of a tramp's life rather than settle down to a life which they detested and despised for its lack of spiritual aim.



Not that they had anything like a clear spiritual aim themselves. But they were looking for one, which seemed better than resigning and putting up with the much-quoted 'Ground of Established Facts'. So they went out into the 'Houselessness' like the Buddha, trying to be independent of everything but their conscience, and hoped to find on their way salvation not only for themselves but for the whole hopeless and disturbed world.

So far, the revolution against home and school had been a game played with great enthusiasm. The life in which they believed, they only followed on week-ends and holidays: it was no more than a 'token' revolution. The safety of the attacked bourgeois home had always been there in the background, to return to in case of emergency. By now, that safety had become somewhat doubtful, and at the Wander-vogel meetings you met these heroes who had drawn all the consequences and were practising the creed without a safety-belt. By their looks they were not a bad advertisement for the 'life without compromise'. As a rule these people were strong and healthy, with beaming eyes and sun-tanned faces, merry and carefree. Their clothes were shabby, it is true, but they were free from the hated bourgeois style, and told the story of many nights at the camp-fire and of roving days in sun and storm.

These romantic figures gave a new note to the meeting in the old town, a note of serious business, reality and true adventure.

When the fire had almost burnt down, two young men were still having an argument across the dying flames. The greater part of the assembly had retired to sleep. Only a few indefatigables were listening and keeping what remained of the fire burning. It was a pleasure to watch the two disputants, both perfect of their kind and beautiful. One was a young Jew, slender, with the noble profile of the Sephardic race. He was wearing a flaming red cap on his black curls. The other, enveloped in a long blue cape,

looked exactly like an animated Dürer woodcut. He might easily have been the portrait of a medieval German artisan or monk. Even in Wandervogel circles, where orators were bred wholesale, their skill in speaking was remarkable.

The argument was: Can a Jew appreciate the idea of the Youth Movement?

The young man in the red cap said that he wanted to 'shape his life according to his conscience only' in the same way as his Gentile opponent. The blue cape admitted that this might be so. But, he said, that was not the point. To adopt the famous formula was nothing but a bare necessity for anyone who wanted to be acknowledged as a human being. It could be understood intellectually, and he had no doubt about the Jew's intellectual faculties. The true mystery of the Wandervogel was not a thing to be understood, it had to be felt in the songs and the dances and the feeling of fraternity. It was an essentially German mystery.

The Jew answered that he would not be there if he did not enjoy joining in the songs and dances, and if he did not feel fraternal towards his fellow Wandervögel. Moreover, he had been born and bred in Germany, and he could not help feeling himself a German. To question this feeling seemed to him merely absurd.

The man in the blue cape looked across the fire in the other's face. 'No doubt, you are sincere. You believe that you enjoy all the things we cherish, you believe that you are German and that you can feel the mystery. But you only believe all this. It is not really true, because you are not of the Blood. The Blood is the Spirit.'

I don't remember whether the Jew had anything to say to that, but anyhow what can you say to an opponent who admits all you say and then retires behind a mystical screen which is not to be discussed and behind which all arguing ends?

Whatever he said, the end of the dispute was that both opponents assured each other of their highest esteem and

of the unshakability of their opinions, and then everybody present without distinction of race or creed joined in a song. After all, they were all young and full of the best intentions, and ready to sacrifice everything in their war against the organization of life as it then was. The mere fact that they all were fighting for the different things, each group calling its particular thing 'the spirit', was enough to unite them again and again into one Brotherhood of Fighters.

The young man in the blue cape was to be seen everywhere where Wandervögel met, arguing, disputing and casting a spell over his audience. By and by he became well-known in the Youth Movement. His name was Lamberty, and he called himself Muck.

In fact, the Youth Movement had just entered the last stage before its final decay. There was a general feeling amongst the young people that mere singing and dancing and disputing were not enough, and that it was about time to find some kind of political programme to present to the world which was longing for salvation. Once brought into contact with serious life, the older generation of the Wandervögel could not help being affected by current political opinions. There were all sorts of groupings, in all the colours of the political rainbow, but they were all still attached in some way or the other to the old ideas of the Youth Movement. At various times the experiment was made of calling them all together to a big meeting in order to find a programme of joint political activity.

Once they succeeded in gathering a fairly representative 'parliament' of the opposing groups, the main feature of which was that everybody seemed to be determined to preach his own creed and that nobody wanted to listen. Every time a speaker proposed his unity formula, he was left to propose it to his own followers and nobody else. The rest left the hall.

Muck Lamberty somehow managed to address the assembly in full. He ended his speech with the call: 'Put

an end to sterile arguments. Let us again wander into the distant blue — *wir wollen wieder in's Blaue!*'

As usual, the only sign of unity displayed at the meeting was at the end when they all joined in song. It had been the last serious attempt to find a programme, and soon the Movement as such ceased to exist. All the political parties became the heirs of the stock of human material, and certain forms and habits developed in the Wandervogel. The greatest part, as far as phrases, fashions and mannerisms went, was later swallowed by the National Socialists.

But before finally falling to pieces, the Movement made its last, glorious appearance in the Anabasis of the New Troop, Muck's miracle in Thuringia.

It was the first attempt of the Wandervogel to carry their Holy War into public life. It let loose a torrent of emotions and events which carried the initiators to an overwhelming success at first, only in the end to disperse them utterly, leaving behind a broad trail of scattered hopes and hang-overs.

Muck's frontal attack met a disarmed and mentally exhausted enemy. There was hardly anything left to constitute a bourgeois society. All sentimental and moral values had vanished into thin air, the unasked-for freedom to create new ones was a heavy strain, and now the last bulwark of reliability began to break down — the value of private property. The first breach was made when it became known that the Reich government did not pay compensation for German property confiscated abroad. After all the Allies had been crediting the government with the value of the confiscated property on the Reparation account. Now the rightful owners were offered ridiculously small compensation. As if that were not enough, the German government had during the war taken from their subjects at home as a forced loan their shares in 'enemy' companies. They had been given about one per cent of the value and the promise to get their own back after the

war. Now they were simply told that they would get no more. I happened to meet a high official of the Ministry of Finance, and asked him: 'What would you call it if a private person acted in the same way?' He smiled: 'A private person would get several years hard labour.'

The billeting of tenants at rents fixed by the state was another blow against the last stronghold of bourgeois security. It was not a very clever move anyway, as it virtually constituted a Socialist measure, whereas the capitalist system remained unaltered. The only consequence was that nobody dared to build new houses, knowing that it would never pay, and the housing shortage grew worse than ever.

And finally the wave of uncertainty reached the currency. The small savings of the little man vanished as if by magic. Small shareholders received the dividends of millionaires, but the millions could not buy what the pennies used to buy before. If you didn't spend your wages to-day, they decreased in value overnight. You got used to it in time. You learned a useful word for the nightmare: inflation. But in the beginning it was just a nightmare and nothing else.

There was little hope that a change could be brought about by any of the political parties. There was generally little or no hope of getting rid of the Alice-in-Wonderland state by any means. There was nobody to offer any sort of comfort. Who wanted to listen to the churches? Had they not blessed the war? And where was their German God now? Probably He had been defeated together with His army. Or perhaps He had deserted the country together with the Head of His church, the Kaiser?

And how can you trust your neighbour? Why should he have more scruples than the present government or be more loyal than the previous one. Moreover, he usually belongs to a different one of the two score parties from yours, and all the parties seem to agree on one point: that all the others are not decent people trying to serve the country in a different

way, but are consciously trying to drive it into an abyss. They are nothing but immoral, criminal traitors and their only aim is to fill their own pockets. You could read it in every newspaper you opened.

No security, no faith, no trust. It was not a cheerful life. And to-morrow everything would probably be worse.

Right into this life came, marching and dancing and singing, Muck's New Troop. About fifty strong at the beginning, young men and women, so utterly foreign in bearing and appearance and yet so familiar. They might have stepped out of a book of fairy-tales, with their merry, gaudy costumes, but they were obviously very real. There was no security in the world? They thanked God for that. They were glad to have got rid of the slavery of security and established habits. There was no faith in the churches? Then leave the churches alone. Is God not everywhere, and are you not grateful that he created you, gave you eyes to see what a fine day it is to-day, a body which can swing in the joy of dancing? And was there no trust? You are right, brother, there is no trust, but that is your fault. Why don't you start trusting the other fellow? Be friendly, be gay, be grateful for all the beauty you can enjoy if you only look for it. And be bold, and dare to be free; there is nothing as wonderful as freedom. The world is as perfect as it can be, only you won't dare to enjoy it. There is no such thing as bad weather; feel how cooling the rain is streaming down your face, let your hair stream in the storms and let the sun burn upon your skin. Do anything you like, only don't behave as if you were frozen. Ardour is The Spirit! — *Glut ist Geist!*

Were not these simple, too simple teachings, heard a million times from the lips of thousands of reformers? Yes, but Muck was one of those men you cannot help believing. And his boys and girls radiated that strange beauty which comes from sincerity and enthusiasm and, not least, from open-air life, and beauty is always very convincing.

Perhaps the secret of the Troop's success was merely that they dared to bring into real life the joy and beauty of many a dream which ordinary people are wont to cage up in art and literature. This spear-head of the Youth Movement was intended to pierce the heavy armour of bourgeois habits and prejudices; but now the enemy was already demoralized and defenceless before the attack was launched.

So the enemy surrendered without any resistance. The Troop marched singing into a village or town, and started dancing in the market square. Onlookers gathered round. But Muck and his people had not come to give a performance, they made them join in the dance. How was it done? Nobody seemed to know afterwards. It happened somehow, and perfectly normal and respectable citizens linked hands with the strangers, swinging round and singing the lovely old melodies.

There is a mystery in these anonymous old folk-tunes. You need not learn them, you somehow seem to know how they go the first time you hear them. It is because they give voice to the very simple, original feelings we all have in common, once we forget the structure we have been building above and around them.

Everybody joined in the dancing and the songs. A sight not seen since the Middle Ages was to become a common one in Thuringian villages and towns. Dignity, profession, creed and political opinion lost their meaning. The homeless tramp of the Troop, the factory-owner, the clerk, the policeman, the priest, the whore, became nothing but members of the 'swinging community'.

And the children! They followed the Pied Piper as in the fairy-tale and it was useless for their parents to run after them and try to get them home. The chances were that the parents would be the first to go and escort Muck and the ever-growing Troop at least as far as to the next town.

An unheard-of thing happened in the town of Erfurt.

There a Dean opened his cathedral, one of the oldest and most venerable places of worship in the country, for Muck to preach from the pulpit. The leader of the New Troop spoke to the people, as he was wont to do after the dancing had made them willing to listen and accept the seeds of his gospel of boldness, joy and beauty.

The setting in Erfurt was perfect. Two old churches tower above the market-square, separated by a broad flight of steps. Now, after the dance, the space in front of the famous Tetzels Pulpit was filled by a crowd the like of which it had not seen for many years, and Muck preached to the congregation that they should be thankful for their existence in the beautiful world and dare to enjoy its wonders. And he enjoined on them the duty of *Aufartung*, the higher breeding of the race.

Breeding a better, a higher race. 'Marys bearing Messiahs.' Who can dare oppose such a call? But the term 'race' as it was understood by Muck and his audience meant in fact nothing at all. It was the product of ignorance, prejudice and wishful thinking, this 'German Race'. No houses on earth are defended with greater zeal and enthusiasm than castles in the air.

Still, in Muck's racialism it was difficult to find the seeds of what later became the nightmare of Europe. Racists of his kind used to emphasize that they were by no means anti-Semitic. 'We are positive — *for* a higher development of the race; not negative — *against* the Jews.' Even National Socialists whom I had the opportunity of interviewing when their party was still laughed at as a beer-house society declared that in the programme of Herr Hitler there was no room for discrimination or persecution of the Jews. A Storm Troop leader told me in those days: 'You always mix it up: we are not anti-Semite but pro-German.' Many people were taken in by that formula.

The first consequence of Muck's Higher Breed campaign was that it brought about his own downfall.



Growing day by day, the New Troop moved through the Thuringian principalities. Deputations from villages and towns came to meet the harbinger of a better future and tried to persuade him to visit their place next. When they moved to the next town the Troop was always met half-way by enthusiastic crowds. Mothers brought their children to be blessed by Muck, the hem of his now famous blue cape was kissed like a saint's garment. All kinds of people asked his advice, mostly on matters of matrimony and love. The Millennium had begun for Thuringia. Once, two political demonstrations met where the Troop was dancing, Communist and Conservative Youth.

Quite independently of one another they had the same aim, to give the dangerous enthusiasts a good hiding. But when they met over their prey, they were far more inclined to attack each other. It did not take long for Muck to unite them both with his Troop, though their fraternal feelings did not outlast the stranger's stay.

There were already visible signs of a general decay in the little that was left of normal life. Policemen and public servants had been seen joining the dance and singing in open streets, and there had been a new kind of riot, against which the authorities seemed to be helpless.

As beauty more or less took the place of morals in Muck's teachings, aesthetic values were defended with the zeal of religious moralists. On various occasions, the Troop got into trouble with traders at the markets.

Muck was a turner by profession, and he and his men practised the craft on their journeys. Their products had a peculiar style, common among the Wandervögel, which was much akin to primitive peasants' art. The Troop used to sell them in exchange for food and other necessities. The profits, of course, were shared in Communist fraternity.

Not only was this system bound to rouse the anger of the market people, but the members of the Troop regarded the sale of their products as a sacred mission. When a market

was on in town, Muck took the opportunity of delivering another lecture, preaching against the bad taste of established society and comparing the merchandise of the good market-traders very unfavourably with his own beautiful and noble products. When the rightful owners of old-established stalls dared to protest against such manœuvres of the new rivals the strangers rose in holy wrath, and upset their competitors' tables. After all, they argued, the whole world is God's Temple, and Christ acted similarly against the salesmen and money-changers. There were cases when this happened when the injured men afterwards became converted, at least for a day or two.

The new prophet had become a power, esteemed even in high quarters. Not only was it doubtful whether anybody could have been found to call him to account, but this might even have resulted in a general rising. His spell was over the whole country, forcing everybody to join in the strange, enthusiastic style of his own habits. The government of the former Principality of Altenburg placed an old castle, the Leuchtenburg, at Muck's disposal, and invited him to settle down within its walls with the New Troop, and to make it his headquarters. The prophet accepted.

In the Leuchtenburg, Muck Lamberty met his doom. It was not surprising that the revelling crowds who kissed the hem of his garments called him the Messiah. The habit of thinking in Christian terminology quite naturally creates a tendency to call an overwhelming figure the Resurrected Christ. It only depends on the degree to which a person is overwhelmed. Muck always strongly denied any claim to such a title. He personally drew a definite line between enthusiasm — ardour — and hysterics, though many an observer might hardly have detected where the line ran. He was always ready to give advice when it was asked for, but he denied that he possessed any supernatural power or that he was anything else but a human being with good

intentions. He certainly knew that he owed the greater part of this kind of success, especially with women, to his good looks.

But if a woman has set her mind on conquering a prophet, she will find a way, even if she has to employ logic for her purpose. Did Muck not preach that we should love one another and enjoy the good things God has provided for mankind? Did he not call for a higher breed of the race? And was he not the finest specimen of the race, in body and spirit? Well, he might not be the Messiah of the new Millennium, but it was clearly his duty to beget the first child of the Higher Breed, and this child might become the Messiah. The only question was to find a suitable mother.

The enthusiastic swing of the dances, the sweet old tunes, the all-embracing fraternity, the ecstatic preaching, the adoration of the crowds and the background of the old castle walls were a perfect setting for romance. And now romance and love had got a new significance, had become a duty. And everybody was young. Muck, with his thirty years, was the oldest member of the New Troop.

A pilgrimage from all parts of Germany set in. Theologians, academic teachers, politicians and writers came to see the community living 'like the Christians of old' and to question their leader. A flood of articles and pamphlets, mainly admiring, was the consequence.

All would have been well, or at least not much might have happened, if there had been only one mother-presumptive to the Messiah appointed. But there seem to have been two rival Marys, and one of the girls went complaining to the government of Altenburg and stated that Muck was 'holding a Court of Love on the Leuchtenburg'. She admitted having had intercourse with Muck 'in order to test him and his mission'. The government, obviously still under the spell of the sorcerer, delegated a special envoy to the Leuchtenburg, a state councillor accompanied by a

police lieutenant. The proceedings were resembling more the treatment which a rebellious knight might have expected from his liege during the Middle Ages. An irregular court was held in the castle and after three days of hearings and investigations, Muck was 'banished' from the Leuchtenburg and the country. His followers had to fly, and Thuringia tried to forget that it had been witness to the Millennium.

In the following year, Muck founded a new troop out of the faithful remnant, and settled in Naumburg. He gave up missionary activities, and stuck to turning his candlesticks and bowls and other objects of his art-craft. In Hitler-Germany he is reputed to be a leader in this craft.

After his fall there was a boom in apologetic pamphlets, many people having cause to explain why they had been prophets of the new prophet. After news of the polygamous adventures had gone abroad their former hero had to be unmasked further. But nobody could help acknowledging his good-will and the cleanliness of his intentions. Nobody, at least, who had ever met him personally. One of his more benevolent critics accused him of having revelled in beauty and love instead of providing a programme. I think he was wrong to ask for one.

Muck found in Germany something like virgin soil for a new organization of society in his time. What he tried to do was to found a new civilization, as if it were the first one on earth. He succeeded in uniting a surprising number of different people. The power of his personal influence was not smaller than that of many a man who has actually changed the face of his country.

Incidentally, I was never one of his followers, and need not apologize for having taken a charlatan seriously. So I see no reason why I should not take Muck and his plan seriously now, if only as a symptom.

Muck started his activities, like greater men before him, not with an idea or a programme but with the conviction

that in his own personality he had an everlasting source of answers to all the questions he might meet on his way. It was up to the people to ask these questions, and there should have been somebody to write the questions and answers down and make up a system or a programme out of them. This indeed would have been the only way to produce a programme tolerable to Muck. To contrive a programme, a system to be applied to reality, would have been anathema to him. What he expected was that, by some miraculous organic process, a new reality would grow out of a nucleus formed by a personality. It is clear that this growth stipulates an oasis or an island. Theoretically it is not impossible to develop some kind of civilization that way. But the developing of Muck's new world in the middle of a populated country meant that the new ideas, while in the process of budding, had to be forced upon an already existing world. This is the paradox which killed Muck's Millennium. It is apt to appear frequently in Germany, because the longing for the absolute is a main feature of German mentality, and it is typically German that this longing takes the shape of Muck's enterprise, rather than that of an intellectually contrived programme. When later Herr Hitler hurled his thunder against The System, he maintained that he meant the system of democratic government. *Die Systemzeit* always meant the period of the Weimar Republic. But the real object of his hatred was The System proper, any system. He came into power on a programme, written by a man who later vanished utterly from the life of the party. It was never Herr Hitler's programme, because he, in fact, had no use for one. Once in power, he immediately started converting Germany into the island which alone could make his real plans possible. The situation was very similar to the one in which Muck's call to rally round a new ideal had its great success. The Germans had been asked too long to strain their intellect over the question of how to run the country, and they had

failed to find the Absolute Solution they are always longing for. So again, Germany was ready to make the big jump to the direct opposite. After all, what do we need a system for? Down with the treacherous intellect! If we can't get an absolute solution, let us be absolutely something.

## CHAPTER XIII

Die Deutschen langweilen sich jetzt am Geiste, die Deutschen misstrauen jetzt dem Geiste, die Politik verschlingt allen Ernst für Wirklich geistige Dinge.

NIETZSCHE

THE rapidly growing uncertainty in every sphere and the violent or fantastic remedies offered to meet the common hopelessness did not fail to affect me as well as everyone else. I was craving for some sober, disciplined thinking, and this time the University seemed to be the right place to go to. I made up my mind to learn something about the foundations of society, as living in the German jungle obviously called for better equipment. I went to Heidelberg, because there Professor Lederer was lecturing on economics. His name was familiar to me from my Socialist friends in Frankfurt.

I joined there a very active group of Socialist students; and, besides working hard to get a basic idea about how human beings build their states and societies, I occupied myself with the study of social life amongst animals. Generally speaking, animals seemed to have a better time.

Once I had a visitor from Java, a girl who had been on the same boat on my homeward journey. She was a teacher, born in the East, and was in Europe for the first time. I was supposed to show her the unofficial sights, which resulted in many surprisingly new angles. The first day, when walking through the peaceful streets of Heidelberg, the girl suddenly clasped my arm, frightened by an appalling sight. A group of young men, obviously fresh from the battlefield, came our way, smelling of disinfectant, their heads covered with blood-stained bandages. 'But you have told me that there is no more civil war,' said my friend from the East.

There was no war, only the traditional feuds between the duelling corps; and the girl would not believe that such barbarous customs were still practised in Europe, until I took her to a place where she was able to convince herself by peeping through a window.

The majority of the undergraduates belonged either to one of the Fighting Students' Clubs or to some Rightist organization. Their claim to stand for the good old order and decency they proved mainly by alcoholic excesses in public or outrages against fellow-students who did not share their political views. Once the leader of the Socialist group was besieged in the University by a mob of Nationalist students who tried to lynch him. He was badly injured and saved only by the fire brigade who played their hoses on the raving crowd. Once when I was walking with my Dutch friend a student jostled against me and made a very rude remark. I called him to account for his behaviour which was all the worse in view of the presence of a lady, and he offered to 'give me satisfaction', meaning a duel. I told him that to punch his nose would give me much more satisfaction and pleasure, and as I could not put that idea into practice while escorting a lady in the main street, we took our leave of the young representative of traditional chivalry.

By chance that afternoon a friend of mine had overheard a conversation on the river bank: the young man who could not get my blood in the traditional way and was obviously not sufficiently certain of getting what he wanted the way I had proposed, was talking to some friends. They made a date to ambush me when I came home at night. It would have been easy, as I was staying at the small hotel which is the setting of the famous play *Alt Heidelberg* and which is situated on the river opposite the castle. There are very few houses in the neighbourhood.

I went home that night with a bodyguard of a few friends, and we found the enemy waiting, as we expected, in a dark corner. When they realized that I was not alone, they ran.





their members behaved decently in public and were not, or hardly ever, to be seen taking part in any form of hooliganism. Once they sent an official representative to the Socialist Group, to ask whether we would receive them on our debating nights. We welcomed the proposition, and the scar-faced gentlemen always argued fairly.

Perhaps I should mention that the so-called Corps form a kind of aristocracy amongst the Fighting Associations in general, and 'to be an old member of a Corps' comes to much the same as 'to be an old Etonian' in England; except that in the German version you can't draw any conclusions as to the scholarship of the gentleman in question.

During that term, quite a large crowd of students and other young people was attracted by an outstanding event in Darmstadt, Rabindranath Tagore's first visit to Europe. He was staying as a guest with Count Keyserling, whose philosophical At-Homes were run under the name of The School of Wisdom. Incidentally, Tagore's appearance here labelled him from the beginning in Germany; an undeserved fate. Europe's Greatest Philosopher presenting the Latest Fashion in Eastern Philosophy, be it understood, with deepest reverence. The School of Wisdom always leads.

Tagore spoke in English and the Count translated except in cases where a select audience was supposed to understand foreign languages.

This experience has given me a good understanding of the results of conferences between statesmen who need an interpreter to decide the fate of their respective nations.

There were many members of the Youth Movement among the assemblies in the lovely park of a small castle in the middle of the town, and once, while waiting for the poet, they started dancing on the lawn. Tagore incidentally came to see it and asked for more. On this day he spoke about the unrest in Europe, comparing the European nations with the Saurians of prehistoric days: growing more and more armour at the cost of brains and so becoming unfit to survive.

When he had finished, Count Keyserling began his translation. A lady at my side interrupted: 'Please don't translate. We have understood. And whoever hasn't, will know the real Tagore better without your translation.' It was certainly not very polite towards our host, but it was the voice of the people. I wonder whether someone translated the interruption for Tagore.

After the speech, he asked the Wandervögel to dance again, and he seemed to enjoy it. Smiling he spoke again:

'Your singing and the sight of your dances fell upon my soul like the dew upon a flowering meadow. From it I can see that there is still hope for Europe. . . .'

This time the Count could not be stopped. His translation ran: 'The sage is very pleased with your dancing, and especially the German music has made a deep impression upon his soul. We are glad to be able to give him some more of it.'

And there stood up from the background in perfect order the students of the Technical College of Darmstadt, wearing the coloured ribbons and caps of the Duelling Associations. They started singing. A song from the War of Liberation of 1813. 'The God, who let the iron grow, he had no use for serfs. And therefore he put sword and lance into the right hand of man, to carry on the feud everlastingly unto death.'

It would have been irresistibly comic, had not Tagore obviously mistaken the situation. All he saw was young people in gaudy colours, singing words in a language he could not understand. People began to laugh, and I thought it was a shame. The Count stood in the foreground, proud of his arrangements. Something had to be done. I rushed up to him, and said, I'm afraid, not very politely: 'Stop this ridiculous performance, or I'm going to translate the words to Mr. Tagore.' The Count was taken by surprise. He stared at me without giving an answer, turned on his heels and waved the students to stop. The boys did not understand what was going on when he approached them with gestures

as if he wanted to scare chickens away. The song broke off, and the militant youth retired in disorder.

When the term ended I left Heidelberg to go back to my old university in Giessen. The economic state of Germany became frightening. I was already a multi-millionaire (or was it already millionaire?) and it became more obvious every day that the only real value of my whole fortune consisted in the market garden. So it would be best if I went home and looked after it.

The changing of universities was a common custom in Germany, and in my case it did not matter as the Heidelberg term was only intended to be an interlude.

Perhaps I should say some more about the German University in general.

The German University was not meant to give an education in the English sense of the word. It transmitted a certain amount of scientific knowledge and the student was at liberty to pick up this knowledge where and how he pleased. There were only a few compulsory lectures for admission to examinations, and generally the undergraduate was left to the so-called 'Academic Freedom'. This term originally meant the professor's freedom to teach whatever he was able to answer for scientifically without interference from any authority outside the University, and they were very proud of this liberal achievement. So far as the University moulded a certain type of character, this was left to the duelling corporations. There is no need to go very deeply into the matter of the many complicated differences between Corps and *Burschenschaft* and *Landmannschaft* and all the rest. In the beginning they all originated from the fellowships of countrymen at foreign universities. Those organizations uniting perhaps all the Bavarians in Bologna used to own houses forming something of the nature of a college, so when these institutions were revived in the nineteenth century in the form of students' clubs, their members took the names of Saxons, Bavarians, Prussians and so on, irrespective of exact origin,

and took over the duty of guiding and educating the young students. The word education has no exact equivalent in the German language; it comprises two different words at the same time: *Bildung* and *Erziehung*. The university as such transmitted *Bildung*, the corporation *Erziehung*. The only means of education in the corporations were the Code of Honour and the Code of Drinking. Only a boy who passed the test of fighting a number of duels and of drinking an unbelievable amount of beer by fixed rules was admitted as a full member and had the right to bear the coloured ribbon across his chest. Therefore the boys did not really fight for their honour and drink for their pleasure, and both these main activities of a German undergraduate were nothing but unhealthy games. The rules were very elaborate to make sure that no really dangerous wounds could be inflicted in one case and that dead drunkenness was guaranteed in the other. There was an old joke about the reasons why an umpire should break off a duel at different universities. In Munich it was regarded as sufficient if one of the fighters got thirsty, in Bonn if he had a blood-stain on his, of course patent-leather, boot, whereas in Giessen the death of one of the duellists was not a reason to break off the fight. In one way it paid to be disfigured by scars on the face and to have one's health ruined by drinking competitions, for the corporations were a mutual insurance almost essential for any career in the civil service. This fact explains why the administration of the cabinets in the German Republic was never very different from those of the Imperial era. Whatever the kind of government elected by parliamentary majorities, the permanent departmental chiefs and minor civil servants were always of the same type, and it was always the same type of judge who, detesting in his heart of hearts every shade of democrat, was therefore readier to send a liberal writer of pamphlets to prison rather than a Right-wing political murderer. Apart from cases of open corruption, it must be well understood that it was not exactly

political conviction, in the proper sense of the word, which influenced these judges. The corporation had trained their instincts to despise everybody who was not a fighting student or an army officer. The working classes were regarded as necessary sub-humans, useful in factories and as cannon-fodder in a war. The middle classes were generally god-sent as admirers and humble supporters, as long as they did not produce that strange, dangerous and suspect thing called intellect. They also sometimes produced art, which was tolerated in the shape of patriotic pictures and plays or Wagnerian music, but which sometimes was called modern and therefore classified as subversive. The only real human was a man who at the University had practised 'joyful scuffling and boozing' and was always ready to defend his honour by means of his sword. It must be remembered that the young man had to go round and look for somebody to be good enough to insult him, because otherwise the novice could not have the necessary number of rows to qualify as a full member of his corporation. The life of a *Couleur-Student* was expensive and it was not every undergraduate who could afford it. Besides, even before the war, there was an increasing number of students who did not acknowledge the boastful, fighting and drinking type as the ideal of a young scientist. These non-incorporated boys, called 'finches', led a somewhat oppressed life, not being represented at or on any occasion representing the University. After many years of internal struggle they succeeded during the war in obtaining official acknowledgment as a body representing all the students who were not in some colour-bearing corporation or other. Of course such a negatively defined body could not agree upon a programme and could not offer any marked resistance to the well-organized, traditional corporations. Whereas the majority at first tried to keep politics out of their organization and to stick to university matters, this turned out to be impossible after the Revolution. While the corporations occupied, nay, were identical

'Mithin ... müssten wir wieder vom Baum der Erkenntnis essen, um in den Stand der Unschuld zurückzufallen?'

'Allerdings', antwortete er; 'das ist das letzte Kapitel von der Geschichte der Welt.'

H. v. KLEIST — *Über das Marionettentheater*

SINCE, as a child, I had meditated on the ceremonies of the court, I had always wanted to investigate why people expect results from actions which seem to have nothing direct to do with their purpose. In short, where does a ritual come from? The historical way, though necessary as a first step to get material, was not satisfactory. The usual answer that people act in a strange way because other people before them have acted similarly — and so forth, until there is hardly any record at all about their actions — merely begs the question. Neither was a purely psychological explanation satisfactory, even in the ingenious and nearly gapless form of the theories of Freud and his followers, though this is not the place to go into the reasons why. However, one of the immediate tasks was to learn as much as possible about every action in plain, bodily reality, performed for spiritual effect, without taking into consideration at first whether this spiritual effect was meant to react upon reality. This involved an investigation into art and its origin, and so, amongst other things, I hit upon the typical German revival of dance as an art which was in full bloom at that time. My leading line was roughly: ritual sacrifice — mystery — mystery play — stage-acting — ballets — 'pure' dance.

There was already quite a library of new books about the subject in existence, but even Rudolf von Laban who was regarded as the great theoretician of the new dance did no

more than provide a hint. He is a great artist indeed and will never be forgotten in the history of the stage. Even if the development of political history has made him a homeless fugitive, it will never be possible to wipe out the deep impression he made on the history of art. One of his earliest pupils — Mary Wigman — made a great impression when I first saw her on the stage. It is by no means sufficient to describe her early 'abstract' or 'pure' dances as being art for art's sake and simply contrary to programme dancing. For I think a strange effect is produced if dancing reaches that stage. As dancing is executed by the whole body of the performer and experienced by the audience through the whole body, there is, so to speak, the largest surface of contact possible. And the less intellectually comprehensible components establish an intellectual contact, the more the compulsion grows to correspond almost to identification. As a side-effect this can be observed at any cinema performance. The less intellectual an audience the more distinctly they can be seen as they leave the cinema moving in the style of the leading actors. They do it only subconsciously and would never be able to repeat this mimicry consciously if asked. Now a style does not come from nowhere and it does anything but lead nowhere. This fact burdens the pattern with responsibility. Obviously the Greek and earlier mystery-acting was aware of this and, moreover, used it to transmit intellectually untransmissible facts, but it would be erroneous to conclude precipitately from this that even the highest point of modern European art has anything to do with religion. Only certain people, who had a faint presentiment of the implications roughly outlined here and suffered from the German inclination to make a religion out of almost everything, surrounded the new dance movement with an impenetrable mist of mysticism. As usual, the haze was not so much created by the people actually concerned with the work of reviving the dance as by those writing about it. In fact hundreds of essayists



conceived theories and a flood of glittering brain-waves about the subject, and it was difficult to get even a sketchy summary of the actual facts without wading through a mass of hazy writing.

Previously I had attended a performance of the Loheland Group on the Frankfort Opera stage. There, about half a dozen girls performed something which could not correctly be called ballet. The outstanding personalities were a dark and slender but powerful young woman called Sutor, and something between a very young tree and an angel twice as old as time, called Eva Maria Deinhard. Their costumes were made of an unusual material, coloured in the soft pastel hues of skies at dawn and dusk and sometimes heavily brocaded. Other properties were baskets of a foreign and noble design. It was definitely not a ballet and rather some unknown ritual that they performed, but there was nothing mystic about it. On the contrary they had a smiling matter-of-fact way of doing all these strange things, and, looked at as dancers, they seemed to be more perfectly trained than anything I had seen before. The newspaper critics seemed to be absolutely at sea and small wonder. They had come to judge a ballet, in performance of their daily routine, and had been subjected to a really new experience. Anyhow they all admitted that it was an experience, and somehow a beautiful one. I tried to describe the impression in a letter which ran something like this:

'This Loheland seems to be a foreign country indeed and not a normal school of dancing. But not so foreign after all, even if the only likeness I can think of is the island of Bali. This definitely does not mean that the Lohelanders have borrowed their style from there or anywhere else, but I could imagine that if a people of an unaffected grace of body and mind similar to the Balinese had developed their civilization in Europe, the effect might look like what we have seen here on the stage.'

Of course, I had heard about Loheland before. It called

itself a School of Gymnastics, Crafts and Husbandry, and had only recently settled down in the Rhoen, a lonely country of barren hills. One of the fashionable dance philosophers, hinting at a somewhat sultry atmosphere amongst a community of some eighty female mystics, had called it a 'dance-nunnery'. Not very encouraging for a visitor. The Loheland I saw did not seem to fit in that picture, however strange it might have been. Nor did the first Loheland woman I met. She was appointed teacher of gymnastics at Giessen University, as sober, natural and friendly a young woman as one could wish to meet, married to a young doctor and studying medicine herself. Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about her was just the atmosphere of cleanliness which the young woman radiated. I subscribed to her lessons and got acquainted with a system of gymnastics which is certainly the most finely developed one I know, it may be even too fine for general purposes. The founders of Loheland, Hedwig von Rohden and Luise Langgaard, had graduated via the Mensendiek system, but their own work went much further. They really start at the very beginning. It is impossible to give here (or anywhere else) an adequate description of a gymnastic system in print, but the basic idea was something like this: There is a position of the upright standing body where it is in absolute equipoise, and it has a distinct centre of gravity. Every, even the minutest, displacement has to be reacted upon by the whole body, though the reaction may be infinitesimal. Already movements of organs are causing this reaction, let alone the movement of breathing. From this point the Loheland practice achieved a more than feline grace. I will not say that I myself reached this high point, but during the lessons I got more and more interested in the work, and when one day I asked my teacher whether it would not be good to do a bit more about it than having one or two lessons a week, she asked why I did not go to Loheland itself and study the system from the beginning. Although it was so far a school for girls only, I was told

they would be glad to try their work on a male student. My friends of course grinned at the idea of my joining the 'dance-nunnery', but when the term closed I set forth, feeling somewhat like a courageous explorer approaching the threshold of a mysterious temple. The nearest railway station was Fulda, a very small town on the borders of the Rhoen hills, known as the oldest episcopal see in Germany, founded by St. Boniface, the first Christian missionary amongst the Germanic tribes. The legend says that the saint cut an oak tree sacred to the god Wotan and quite innocently started building his first church out of the timber. As Wotan either could not or would not interfere, though everybody maliciously expected the sacrilege to be punished at once, the Rhoenlanders got the shock of their life. For the first time in history they changed their minds and took on something new, a thing which hardly happened again in the two thousand years to follow. The second time, Herr Hitler worked the miracle.

The town is worth while visiting for its wonderful old buildings. There is a large square in the middle of it, surrounded by the fine old cathedral, the episcopal palace and its gardens, and the oldest church in Germany. It has also one of the oldest synagogues, and a number of famous monasteries. There was no regular means of transport from Fulda to Loheland and I had to march a couple of hours eastwards. Seen from there the Rhoen in some ways

done so. The peasants not very surprisingly took it for an invitation to throw stones at the next Lohelanders passing the village. Later they got accustomed to the intoxicating sight of sinful bare legs, I think mostly because they could not help noticing how very hard these girls had to work. The school was rather expensive and most of the students rather poor. So they worked for their board or their tuition as a rule. But work in garden and fields, or in one craft or another, was compulsory as part of the system. Usually the student had a small room of her own in one of the surrounding hamlets and even the way to and fro had to be regarded as a conscious part of the training. All the rooms were white-washed and the furniture consisted of a low mattress, a table only about fifteen inches high, a few hooks on the wall for clothes and sometimes a small chest. Chairs were strictly prohibited, bast mats taking their place. Sitting down and standing up, and in well-trained Lohelandian style too, thus became an extraordinary useful exercise and developed legs worth while showing bare. One had to go about the house bare-footed or in soft socks, and outside to wear specially broad shoes, the effect being disastrous for chiropodists. One hardly knows how beautiful a human foot is meant to be unless one has had the experience of Loheland. When I met Eva Maria Deinhard I noticed that she was wearing socks shaped like gloves, a separate part for each toe.

After passing the village of Dirlos I had to leave the high-road and go up-hill through the wood. Where the trees ended I found myself on top of a minor hill, covered with white and purple heather and flaming yellow broom. There was a small round building, only one story high with a low, cone-shaped roof and very big windows. Inside someone was playing a piano, a fugue apparently by an early Italian master, or perhaps a pre-Bach German. Then a young woman came out carrying a bundle of woven stuffs under her arm, and walking slowly towards a bigger wooden building in the background, she dropped one piece after

another without noticing it. I gathered the pieces as I followed her, and now I knew where I had seen the colours of the Rhoen before. On the stage in Frankfort. All the fabric used in Loheland was hand-woven there by the students and they took the colour-schemes from the hills and the skies directly. I dare say the impression of an independent civilization is to a great extent due to these perfectly harmonious colours one finds everywhere in Loheland — the soft yellow of raw waxed wood, the mellow vermilion of bricks and the 'woven skies'. Never outspokenly mentioned, the general tendency or the proper purpose of Loheland seemed to be indeed the development of an independent civilization. There might be similar enterprises, but they are usually run after a premeditated ideal. I am certain that this was not the case here, at least not in these early years. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that everything developed out of an extremely fine research into, and a deep knowledge of, the human body. Why not, even for argument's sake, presume that it is possible to start a civilization from there? At least the ground is safer than anything spiritual, and the spirit desired might gladly descend and accept the body provided. But I cannot vouch for this as the accepted Loheland doctrine. Authoritatively stated, it was that the system of gymnastics was the foundation of all Loheland activities, and the necessary basis for weaving, basket-making and husbandry, as well as for arts, including eventually dance. So it was misleading indeed to look upon the enterprise as a school of dancing. Some people who came there to be dancers and were daring enough to say so, had to put up with every kind of discouragement.

When I approached the wooden main building for the first time, burdened with multicoloured fabrics, a group of girls were sitting on a terrace peeling potatoes. I remember them only as a group, framing one face which could not be overlooked. It was set in long, black hair, the face of a mere child, and I never saw it again in Loheland for the

girl left only a few days later. When I met her again, she had become the dancer Vera Skoronel, which may mean nothing to most people but everything for the few that have known her. In Loheland hers had been a similar case to that of Niddy Impekoven, who had dared to confess that her one and only aim was to become a dancer. She picked up by instinct what they could teach her, but did not believe in the rest and left soon rather disappointed. Loheland was just not the place for the normal artistic temperament, but one had to become a full citizen of that country and it was not as easy as all that. Later one might be allowed to develop into a Loheland artist.

There had already been one male student, a young boy, who for a while attended lessons and finally was given a diploma, but he had not been a regular student. I met him later, when he was a leading ballet-dancer in Berlin. Loheland was not entirely female. There was a young cabinet-maker to run one of the workshops; at times a young blacksmith came to stay a few weeks; and there were two or three men working on the farm. So I had company for my lessons — or at least part of them — as everybody connected with any branch had to do gymnastics. At most of the lessons students went naked. The fact would certainly have shocked certain people outside if it had been known, and was probably one of the reasons why visitors were not at all encouraged. This seclusion on the other hand led sometimes to fantastic rumours. There was never any tendency to nudism in Loheland, the nakedness on occasions being just necessary for so refined an observation of the body. And it should not be forgotten that the human body was then nothing but an object for studies and a tool for pupil and teacher — which makes all the difference. When one comes to think of it, one is surprised to find nudism almost always being attacked from an incorrect angle. From their programme as well as from their average psychology, nudists should be acquitted of the charge of lasciviousness.

Their enemies should confess that they themselves are afraid that the frequent sight of a naked body may reduce its erotic value. But after all, people who want to preserve secrets and mysteries cannot rightly be asked to be outspoken. The nearly unlimited liberty in the republican years involved, it is true, a rise in nudism as well as in other unusual movements. But in practice there was not much to be seen and heard save a few periodicals in the windows of some bookshops. Nobody bothered about the private craze of a handful of people hidden behind barbed wire fences and hedgerows. So it was amusing frequently to come across outside Germany the idea that nudism was a German speciality. Particularly in Spain, every German was supposed at least to know all about this interesting vice and it was sometimes difficult indeed to convince simple souls that every German was not an active nudist. I myself, being professionally interested in odd things, did not find it so easy to discover all about it in Germany, save by means of nudist periodicals. I mention the whole thing only because after all there was something typically German in it, though the movement did not play any important part. *Nacktkultur*, as it was called, was nearly always connected with not only sun-bathing but sun worship of some more or less metaphorical kind, mystic vegetarianism, ancient Germanic runes and other semi-religious paraphernalia. In these latter it ran parallel with the Youth Movement, in which, however, the actual nudist influence was negligible. But anyhow it was a glorious example of the German tendency to make a religion out of anything.

Here the explanation might be found of why it was so grossly overrated outside Germany. The German language is a very flexible medium, wonderfully fit for certain purposes, but it has its dangers. The practically unlimited possibility of composing words which are not found in the everyday vocabulary is very useful. But this advantage can be misused to a terrifying degree. As of course the parts out

of which such a new word is composed have a definite meaning, the whole monster looks intelligible. Scores of such words, meaning absolutely nothing, can be produced for the asking. But they sound as if they mean something, and as the sense behind them is by no means obvious, it must be a very deep one. I have heard a German writer defending these horrors. He honestly believed that this was just the point of the language, and that deep mysteries unveiled themselves even (or rather especially) in incidental compositions, for which theory he found a backing in the ancient German custom of 'throwing the runes'.

To come back to *nos moutons nudistes*, their essays and manifestos were packed with this kind of deep-sounding language, with curious consequences. In translating the pompous chatter one had to face the same problem as the harmless German reader, namely to find a meaning behind the words. Only the translator had to substitute a clear word of his own language for the supposed meaning. It is astonishing how sensible a certain kind of German semi-philosophy sounds for instance in English translation, and I shall have to come back to the same problem later.

As I said before, Loheland did not encourage visitors if only for the reason that curious sightseers are bound to spread misleading reports about such a new and complicated thing as this strange community. But sometimes visitors could not be avoided. One day I was leaning, rather exhausted after a strenuous lesson, against the entrance of the little round building already mentioned. We used to call it the Round House, and it contained a spartan bed-sitting room for one of the leaders of the school and a big round room for gymnastics and occasional dancing parties or concerts. Then a stranger in golf dress came out of the wood, carrying a rucksack. 'Grüss Gott,' he shouted with a pompous swing of his hat in the German equivalent of an exaggerated Oxford accent. 'Might I be in Loheland here?' I told him he was, and that encouraged him to the excited



question whether the Round House was our temple. I bravely resisted the temptation to tell him that we slaughtered a virginal sacrifice here every week-end, and said it was a studio. He was very disappointed, and turned out to be a well-known German poet, armed with letters of introduction from scores of people ranging between bishops and newspaper editors. So he had to be shown round. When he saw me taking off my shoes before entering the Round House he smiled knowingly, and said he had known it was a temple, and he appreciated my guarding the mystery. It was no use explaining that it was only part of the routine, and in the special case of studios meant to protect the polished floor. I tried honestly to convince him that this was a hard-working group of rather sensible people, and I am sure nobody else pulled his leg, tempting as it was, for the girls always vanished round the nearest corner bursting with laughter when he approached. In spite of that he published a newspaper article from which again we learned that we practised a wonderfully mysterious ritual, carefully guarded against strangers, even when they carried a cabinet minister's letter of introduction. And I had not even seen the one from the minister! Perhaps if I had I should have unveiled the inner sanctum. Anyway he had in fact seen what we regarded as our sanctuary, the small room in the Round House which was a venerable place without any mystery. There he had an interview with the occupant, Hedwig von Rohden. I dare say we felt more than the normal student's enthusiasm for a worshipped teacher towards this outstanding personality, who would have convinced anybody except a German poet scenting out a mystery.

Loheland had one weak point, the same as Hilton's Changri La. It was too beautiful, and though existing in reality it was not real. It entirely neglected the world as it is, and started building a new one which was wonderful but incomplete. In its gentle atmosphere one did not notice

the incompleteness, even if for nearly all the inhabitants it went so far as to neglect the existence of the other sex. When Lohelanders went abroad from their island on top of the hills they felt themselves strangers in any normal surroundings and used to suffer a good deal from homesickness or in some cases run wild. In one regard Loheland differed from similar artificial islands which were fairly plentiful in Germany. The students aimed at taking a certificate as teachers of the Loheland method, and after a couple of years or so returned to the world as a matter of course. So the island was not a place of refuge for people with odd ideas like the many *Siedlungen* I shall have to speak about later, but rather a radiating and growing nucleus. Nobody is entitled to state that as an experiment in founding a new kind of civilization Loheland was a complete failure. The only proof would have been a historical one, and it never lived to complete its world.

Shortly before I left I met another visitor at the Round House. He too was clad in plus-fours and carried a rucksack and he also asked strange questions. But he did not seem to know in which part of the country he was hiking. He had the accent of an educated man and somewhat jumpy manners. His face was typically German and friendly, though obviously he was worried. I gave him tea and was relieved when he did not want to be shown round the place. From our conversation I gathered that he had been to some university. He left after an hour or so, and the following day I found his picture on a warrant at the police station in Dirlos. He was wanted for the murder of a Left-wing politician. As far as I remember he was never arrested.

If Loheland tried to build up a new civilization on the basis of physical refinement, one other centre at least tried to influence European civilization from the opposite direction — that of the planning intellect. The old and reputable Academy of Arts in Weimar shortly after the war had changed into the first so-called Bauhaus. The name was taken from

the medieval institution of the Bauhütte. The word originally denoted a hut or shelter for builders, but was later used for a kind of Worshipful Company, including all the men concerned with the building of an edifice — architects, painters, builders, decorators and all the rest. They belonged to different guilds but joined in a Bauhütte as long as they had a purpose in common, such as the building of a cathedral. The new institution was well christened. Its approach to art resembled that of the Lohelanders. Art was not regarded as something which one could tackle bare-handed, but as a possible crowning or a blossoming out of other activities. In Weimar the starting-point was the planning intellect of the architect, who constructs a house in the same sober and calculating spirit as an engineer constructs a machine. The ideal was to know all there is to know about every material as well as the laws of statics and the wishes and expectations of house-dwellers, and then to start as if one were undertaking the task of building the first house in the world. It was clear at the outset, that the task was possibly not purely intellectual, so the synthetic spirit was expected to be propitiated by selecting apprentices from young people who qualified for an Arts Academy. They were not allowed to paint or mould, but had to pass the normal State examinations for craftsmen. Every workshop had a certified Master of the Craft and also a Master of the Shape, who was always a well-known artist or sculptor. But this division was meant to vanish in time and it was intended to breed Masters of the Bauhaus, uniting the knowledge and the position of both. Of course one could describe such an architect as just a good one, and the whole programme might be found already in Jerome K. Jerome's *They and I*, but actually a systematic experiment on so large a scale had not been attempted before. The ideas of the first founders, two Weimar artists, Determann and Röhl, were vague about details, and the whole scheme attained shape only when one of Germany's leading architects was asked to take

over the architectural studio. Walter Gropius accepted and took command of the whole plan without much asking. His name, genius for organization and diplomacy very soon made the Bauhaus famous all over the world. His task was an extremely difficult one. Like all new and promising things the new Academy attracted scores of quaint inventors, people with a *Weltanschauung* and all the rest of the odd crowd. Followers of the Mazdaznan religion had a rather important influence in the first year, at times even the students' canteen was run on the lines of their strange ritual feeding theory. Besides, there were machine-wreckers with romantic ideas about religious revivals of medieval craftsmanship, vegetarians anxious to develop furniture on the spiritual basis of meatless diet, utilitarists, expressionists, constructivists, in short all the -ists of the world except the political ones were represented. But without asking for it, the Bauhaus from the beginning was an object of political controversy. There were some relics of the old Academy of Arts, flourishing under the name of Weimar School of Painting, and it was amusing to see how they were, as a matter of course, counted upon as supporters of the bourgeois reaction. I well remembered the days of merry old pre-war Weimar, when the same people had been the terror of all the good citizens. Now the mere fact that something new had displaced their academy promoted them to the rank of nice people and reliable citizens themselves. They had not changed in fact and were precisely the same jolly crowd of romantic and liberal, not to say libertine, students. Before the war their illegitimate children had been proverbial. Now the most important political newspaper of Weimar denied the possibility of any such happenings at the School of Painting, at the same time accusing the Bauhaus of an appalling degree of moral decay. Five female apprentices, it was publicly made known, were already pregnant. In a small town this kind of slanderous charge can become very dangerous, and something had to be done. So most solemnly we answered with a strict accuracy

that the article in question did much honour to the excellent ability of the investigator and that the number alleged was absolutely correct. Only we did not follow the steps by which moral conclusions were reached, since, incidentally, all the ladies in question were married not only by law but even in church. I could not rightly say that we were a bunch of saints, but all we did was dealt with in quite another measure. There was for instance in the garden of the old academy, now ours, a rather boring female nude in white marble, the Eva by Professor Brütt. One night some Bauhaus students converted her to expressionism by painting nice gaudy stripes all over her too correct anatomy with a wall paint which could be wiped off in a moment without leaving any traces. The Weimar Town Administration insisted on a heavy fine and expulsion of the evil-doers. But when a bunch of School of Painting students raided the lobby of the Bauhaus and hewed down with sculptors' mallets the reliefs on the walls because they did not please their artistic taste, and afterwards dirtied the place in an unspeakable manner, nothing but a solemn reprimand was the consequence. Of course all the Bauhaus people were 'Reds' in the eyes of the population and I think the famous expression 'Cultural Bolshevism' was first invented to pillory our products. During my time there were three members of one Socialist organization or other at the Bauhaus — certainly a very influential group amongst some hundreds of students! Actually it would have been difficult to find them, as nobody was interested even in discussions about politics. On the other hand, the opponents' instincts were not so far out. To put the planning intelligence in the place of tradition is somehow akin to Marxism, and certainly opposed to True German Spirit, even if it is only applied to the making of furniture or the building of houses. Yet what provoked them mainly was the wrong side of the business. The apparently subversive tendencies of expressionist form-wrecking were far too romantic to have any real connection with Marxist

thinking. But even then the pitiable muddle in terminology which later began to conquer the world was setting in, and 'Red' became the summary expression for everything disquieting, from whatever source and side it might come.

There is no denying the fact that there existed a kind of kinship between the Bauhaus and the Socialist parties. The teachings of both of them were rationalist in principle, which means that they were ready to question any established value in order to find the best solution. This seemed to establish a hostile attitude toward the Traditionalist parties and their teachings, as the Traditionalist is opposed to arguing, his supreme value being established beforehand outside the realm of argument.

But what were the facts in the case of the Bauhaus? To work 'following the tradition of German Craftsmanship' cannot mean making a chair 'as it has always been made'. There is no such form of a chair, it has always changed, and it is impossible to pick out one form or one style and making it the German Standard, as the only standard worthy of being conserved throughout the ages.

To make a chair according to the German (or any other national) tradition of craftsmanship can only mean making it as well as possible, unless the tradition to be preserved is to produce trash. But to make it as well as possible implies rational thinking about the question: which is the best form for a piece of furniture that has to meet certain requirements? These requirements are partly material and partly non-material.

The material requirements can only be met by studying certain measurable conditions: anatomy, climate, materials, prices, etc. No wishful thinking and no educational purpose has a place in these calculations.

The non-material requirements can also be calculated to a certain extent by scientific means, such as mass-observation and psychology. As easily as you can find out the average ratio between the length of thigh and shank of the

German population, you can find out their general love for the Colossal, the Ultimate and the Representative Appearance, as well as their sentimental longing for *Gemütlichkeit*.

It is not much use trying to alter the basic anatomy of a people, but you may try to influence their psychology. So, in calculations of how to meet the non-material requirements, wishful thinking and educational purposes have their rightful place. Unless the Traditionalist is no more than a rigid conserver of one form picked at random out of history, he has to agree so far.

Those who are not content with the existing state of affairs and want to follow spiritual or idealistic ends may try to reconcile their ends with the unalterable facts.

Nobody but a few snobs will buy a chair only because it is advertised as the guaranteed most scientifically correct and practical piece of furniture, and the most idealistic chair does not sell if the public cannot sit on it.

If the hostile attitude of the Right-wing parties and especially of the National Socialists had emerged only from that alleged antagonism between Tradition and Rationalism, the argument could have been settled. There were two reasons why this could not be done. The first was that people who 'think with their blood' decline on principle to argue, the second is more complicated but of the utmost importance for the understanding of certain methods in the political tactics of the National Socialists: the principle of creating palpable enemies.

For an open-minded observer it is sometimes strange to see how a certain group which seems to have nothing to do with politics is pushed into the opposite camp by a political party. Old General Booth may have wondered why this should be so, when he asked: 'Why should the Devil have all the best tunes?'

Actually the devil had not asked for them, he got them as a free gift from his opponents. Outlawed on one side, they found themselves automatically in the camp opposite, and the Salvation Army was certainly right in claiming them

back. A tune as such is neither sinful nor holy, and the gift had been made unintentionally.

In political tactics it is sometimes very effective to make such a present intentionally to the opposing party. There was nothing whatever in the purpose or the teachings of the Bauhaus which had anything to do with politics. It had no political position to defend. Only when the National Socialists invented the term Cultural Bolshevism for everything new in arts and crafts did the Bauhaus find itself nominated or appointed political enemy to a political party.

To appoint as political enemy somebody who has no political position to defend is a mean but effective trick. The victory over such an enemy is easy, and later on nobody asks how cheaply the new scalp was gained.

Besides, the creation of an Enemy by Appointment serves a useful propagandist purpose.

When the National Socialists declared themselves the gallant knights who would fight the dragon Bauhaus, they were hailed by the crowd of petty-bourgeois not only in Weimar. The Philistine, so widespread and influential in Germany, always had the feeling that modern art or architecture was something directed against his *Gemütlichkeit*. The Bauhaus was preaching against the dust-catching plush and the sentimental ornaments of his drawing-room, so when he was told that it was the political opponent of Herr Hitler's party, he knew what his duty was.

The Enemy by Appointment has always to be without proper line of defence and suspect to the poor in mind.

You can find the proof that the National Socialists acted consciously in employing the tactic mentioned, by looking at the famous fight against the flat roof. Before Herr Hitler came into power, the purpose of the fight against the Bauhaus was only to gain an easy victory to occupy another key-position, and to attract followers. A main slogan of that fight was: The flat roof, as advocated by the Bauhaus architects, is un-German; it is Oriental and therefore Jewish.



It was not easy for the poor architects to defend themselves against that reproach. They had been looking at the subject from a merely constructional viewpoint, and were ready and prepared to defend their flat roof against relevant arguments. Now they were called upon to defend the German-ness of a structure, and it was small wonder that they could not find sensible arguments. The National Socialists knew perfectly well that their challenge was unanswerable, because it was meaningless to anybody who did not 'think with the blood'.

When Herr Hitler came into the position of dictating by decrees what had to be regarded as German or not, he did not abolish flat roofs. After all, his hobby had always been architecture, and he could not help knowing something about the subject. So he designed almost every new State building with a flat roof, and one of the regulation books expressly advocates the 'un-German, Jewish' structure for public as well as for private buildings. Now it was Herr Hitler who asked why the Devil should have all the best tunes.

Eine Republik zu bauen aus den Materialien einer niedergerissenen Monarchie, ist ein schweres Problem. Es geht nicht, ohne bis erst jeder Stein anders gehauen ist, und dazu gehört Zeit.

G. CH. LICHTENBERG

At the time when the Bauhaus was in its prime in Weimar, the general political situation in Germany was entangled and embarrassing. As schematically applied democracy includes its own paradoxical death, a strange situation had arisen in some of the German *Länder*. Strictly according to constitution the voters of Thuringia and Saxony had elected a Parliament which had a clear Labour majority to which there was no alternative. So the governments of these parts of the country were purely Socialist and included Communist ministers. No one can deny that their rule sometimes diverged somewhat widely from the proper democratic spirit and perhaps even from the letter of the Reich constitution, but then they had to face extraordinary difficulties. Calculating a budget had become something like racing on a treadmill. The best illustration might be a ridiculous experience of my own. I went to a bank during my first visit to the Bauhaus in order to cash a cheque. It was an amount intended to keep me alive in some comfort for a month or so and I forget how many billions of marks that was at the time. In Weimar the bank told me that they had not enough cash ready and I had to go to their Jena branch. There I got the same answer, only they were ready to pay if I did not object to green 1000-mark bills. I did not as I could not see the importance of the colour and was burdened with a bale of paper which I could hardly move. The green bills were very large indeed and one billion marks bought about a shillings-

worth. I had to carry an army haversack as a purse and to persuade waiters to spend many minutes counting the green scraps when I had a drink. When I say a billion was about a shillingworth I should have said that this was so on a certain day. A fortnight later it might have been only six-pennyworth. So the money just vanished. Professor Feininger, who was then a Master of Shape at the Bauhaus, was a very friendly helper. He went with me and the whole family and staff to buy provisions with my billions and paid me back on a gold rate standard in Thuringian bills of so-called emergency money. Such was the budget of a normal citizen. Apart from being his pupil I happened to be Herr Feininger's landlord. He had become the successor of the Prussian general as *Zwangsmieter*. And not only that. I had to let the house unfurnished, as I was regarded as being 'not in need' — whatever that might have meant. Professor Feininger was 'not in need' either, so he was not allowed to let a furnished room to me, and besides there was not one to spare as he had a large family. So the paradoxical situation arose that I had to look for a studio in an overcrowded town where I owned a house. Later, after the Preparatory Term I had a Bauhaus studio to share with another student, but for the first months I had to take a small room in an attic which I would have appreciated more as a setting for a Bohemian film. But as a genuinely Bohemian crowd we did not bother much about such things, if that means the art of making a joke of necessity. Having no socks, for us, did not mean that we had to look for an excuse; it was something around which to develop a proud theory as to why a self-respecting and civilized person never should wear such things. And I have never seen people dance so much in my life, not even the Wandervögel. We started dancing at early morning during breakfast time in the students' mess, and went on at lunch, before everybody had finished eating, between the tables. We had parties at night in the studios or in restaurants, and a big party in a nearby village dancing-

hall every week-end. And at least once a month we held a really big party with fancy dress. People came great distances to these balls, and our style of staging such parties became the model for similar festivals all over Germany. We felt ourselves the centre of the world — at least the world of arts and crafts. In a way we were. All that was produced at the Bauhaus was not of value or even tolerable. But after all one point of evidence that an experimenting institution is living up to its name is that it makes mistakes. There was much playing round with ideas and materials, but the introduction of steel tubing by Breuer for the making of chairs was hardly a playful experiment. Looking for a chair which was lasting, simple and easy to produce in quantity, he at first constructed a wooden chair which shocked the public by its barren shape but was surprisingly easy to sit in. Later he improved the idea by introducing steel tubing which gave the right amount of elasticity to the structure, at the same time avoiding complicated springs. The question of style was much discussed in hot-blooded arguments leading to many a private feud. Should textile fabrics be designed by people working on the traditional hand-loom so that the pattern could be copied and developed on mechanical looms, or had the mechanical loom 'its own law' — or were both methods a violation of the free creative spirit? 'Doing justice to the material' was one of the slogans generally accepted, but there always remained exegetical difficulties. The first model house finished was much sneered at because the planning intellect had forgotten to provide the 'dwelling machine' with even the smallest storeroom for trunks and similar necessities. Nevertheless, it was an important step.

Such were the problems that filled our days as far as they were not filled with dancing and the traditional practical jokes such as bathing in public fountains. In spite of being notoriously dangerous 'Reds', we took little or no notice of the awkward political situation. There were some rumours then of a Saxo-Bavarian war breaking out. Thuringia might

be involved. As I have said earlier there were labour governments in Thuringia and Saxony. In Bavaria the Right-wing parties ruled, and if the Lefts sometimes stepped aside from the democratic path, the Rights openly introduced a state which could by no means be described as conforming to the Reich constitution. It is true that in Saxony and Thuringia there existed 'workmen's battalions' and that in some cases they had forced farmers to accept the prices fixed by the government, but they were practically unarmed, whereas the different 'Right' private armies in Bavaria were virtually in charge of the country. A Saxon gendarme was shot dead walking across the Bavarian frontier, by a patrol from a uniformed, semi-military organization in the pay of the Bavarian government, without being a part of the regular army or police force. The funeral of the first victim in what threatened to become a war was a big demonstration, and little as we heard about these things, we all expected the Bavarians to march into Thuringia any day. The workers' battalions could be of little use. They were splendid for other occasions. For example when the Thuringian government appointed the Marxist economist Karl Korsch professor at Jena University, the university did not open its doors for the first lecture of that eminent scholar. Korsch, after trying to persuade them, returned at the head of a workers' battalion and declared in a public speech that he did not wish to damage the nice doors, but feared he might be forced to do so the following day. Then he marched off with his host and held the lecture in a restaurant hall. The doors were open for the following lectures.

One afternoon I was working in one of the Bauhaus workshops installed in an old riding-school in the famous park which Goethe designed. Suddenly one of my fellows gripped my arm and pointed at the roof of an hotel opposite. 'The Bavarians,' he shouted. Soldiers in steel helmets and field-grey uniforms placed a machine-gun there. At the same moment a big car drove up to our gate, and a sentry with

fixed bayonet was placed on every door. They were not Bavarians; from their regimental number I gathered that they belonged to a Württemberg regiment of dragoons. I spoke to the sentry and when the man noticed that I knew his regiment and spoke the military slang, he got more confiding and confessed that they were part of the Reich's Executive force, appointed to fight the Red Army in Thuringia. Shaking his head he further confessed that so far they had seen nothing of the enemy, and could I perhaps tell him where they were? I was sorry I could not, and when I bade him a friendly good-bye and went out, he did not stop me.

The town was full of soldiers. Even motorized heavy artillery was drawn up in the market square. My Württemberg friend's troop seemed to be the only part of the regular army represented. All the rest were clearly volunteers: privates wearing the ribbons of orders only given to officers, many showing the scars of the student fighting corps.

Then the first prisoners were led through the streets. A mounted soldier had a bunch of them beside his horse, hands tied together on their backs and drawn upwards on a short rope. They were brought to a school, commandeered for that purpose as a prison, and when they came out again, cuts and bruises told their tale. As far as I remember, nobody was shot then in Weimar, but many people had an easy vengeance against private enemies, just denouncing them as 'Reds'. A young publisher's and printer's office and workshop was wrecked, because he happened to be a Jew and to bear the same name as a famous Vienna Socialist. He was deeply in love with the German Romanticism and was just busy ruining his firm with a wonderful edition of Eichendorff's works. The first volume was already out only to be torn from the shelves, and the plates of its successor were savagely hammered to pieces. Houses were searched and left in a pitiable mess; by the second day of the occupation the bakers' shops were empty. Martial law was declared and after a forced dismissal of the constitutional government new

elections were held under the guns of the volunteers. The government which came out of these elections by and by succeeded in driving the Bauhaus out of Weimar. It found a refuge in Dessau, and built large modern studios and workshops there, only to be driven out of Germany altogether some years later.

My second term at the Bauhaus I worked in the Experimental Stage Department, a rather high-sounding name for a group of students more or less left to themselves. Nothing much came out of it, but what we did, bringing out something like the idea for a ballet, was much applauded in Berlin. The stage designs usually placed to the Bauhaus's credit had in fact nothing much to do with it, but were the private enterprises of the leader of our department. The department itself had next to no accommodation and certainly no funds.

During this time I had one of the strangest experiences of my life. On the evening of one of our big dancing parties I went together with a friend to see one of our girls. We wanted her to lend us some grease-paint. As we left her flat, a clock struck seven, the hour when shops used to close, and we had no cigarettes left. In vain I tried to parley through the door with the keeper of the only shop in the neighbourhood. He pointed to a lonely man standing under a street lantern and said he was afraid of the police. I tried to persuade him that the stranger's overcoat had only a slight resemblance to a uniform and that policemen never went bareheaded, but without success. So we went down the deserted street and after a couple of hundred yards' walk ran into a girl, whom we recognized from afar as the owner of a cigarette shop much frequented by the Bauhausians. The poor girl had suffered from inflammation of the hip-joints and there was no mistaking it in her swaying walk. We stopped for a chat, and the girl pointed in a jocular way at her suit-case when we asked her for cigarettes, saying that there were all the cigarettes inside, transformed into money.

Of course we knew that she was in the habit of taking the day's earnings home, as many of us had sometimes lent a hand when the streets were slippery. We all liked Jettchen, as we called her, and she was known to give credit to any amount to Bauhaus members. Then we parted in opposite directions, and at the next corner I left my friend. He went to his place and I to mine where nobody saw me until about nine o'clock when a party of friends fetched me for the dance. We danced all night and spent the early morning hours in the country. Then I went with a friend, and only returned to my own place in the afternoon. The studio looked strange indeed. Obviously somebody had been standing on my bed — and in dirty boots too. Some glasses were broken and thrown into a corner and my overalls were torn from the hooks and formed together with other unexpected things a still life on the table. I asked the caretaker about it, and he, very reluctantly, told me that the police had searched my room. Why, he could not tell.

The syndic and legal adviser of the Bauhaus was a great friend of mine and I consulted him. He confessed that the police had seen him in the matter, and though they had pledged him not to tell me a word, the charge was so ridiculous that he felt he must tell me. The cigarette girl on her way home had been robbed with violence and was in hospital on the point of dying. Against the doctor's verdict the police had interviewed her and had got a description of the robber and the possible murderer. It seemed to have been rather a good description of myself.

I went to see the police at once and they said they had been just about to look for me. Then the inspector asked a few questions. Had I seen the girl the previous evening? Yes. I told him all about it. What clothes was I wearing? Grey flannels and a so-called Russian shirt, black, and ballet-shoes. Rather unusual dress? Yes, part of my costume for the dance party. These ballet-shoes make no noise? Correct. The rest of the description: rather tall, slim — all



correct. 'What does your walking-stick look like?' I laughed and said that I never carried one. You have not got one? No. But suddenly I remembered that not to be true. I had a big, heavy stick, standing in the workshop. Somebody gave it to me but we used it only for stirring colours. I told the inspector and the answer was: 'Why did you not say so immediately? All this is no use. We know the stick has vanished.' Well, I did not. Somebody might have taken it. It was a good stick but no use to me. A second inspector joined in the questioning and the two of them kept on cross-examining so that more than once I had to correct a statement and more than once was on the verge of completely losing my temper. Questions like: 'What did you say the unknown man under the lantern was wearing on his head? Nothing? No, I'm sure you said it was a soft hat', make even a patient man mad if they recur too frequently. But I could not offer anything like an alibi. I had very little money, it was admitted. I was a Bauhausian. From the way they said the word, it sounded like 'an old jail-bird'. And then a last stroke: 'How do you account, after stating that you have very little money, for the hundred marks and more found in your studio?' It was after the recent stabilization of the German currency, and the sum represented about five pounds. I simply and truly did not know where so much money could come from in my studio, and said so, knowing that it sounded very weak indeed. The inspector struck a paternal note: 'Look here, all this is no use at all and won't help you. You'd better confess. We have your description. Who else should go about in that fancy dress at that time? You lied about your stick. It has vanished from the studio and was found, blood-stained, near the place. You can't account for the money. And you have no alibi. So what!'

He was absolutely right. I had better confess. I must have done it. Only I could not for all the world remember robbing that girl. Any girl. Anybody. And they had proof, overwhelming proof that I had done it. One reads of mur-

derers, convicted on striking circumstantial evidence, who keep on stubbornly saying 'I am innocent'. It might be an interesting psychological fact, that in certain cases one simply forgets violent and terrible facts. That possibility is not too remote and rather fits in with Freud's theory about remembering and forgetting. Unpleasant memory displaced into the subconscious mind and all that. There was obviously nothing to be done, but it was a terrible experience. I had no hope whatever of being able to explain my thoughts to the officers. But I did not want to confess to a crime, which I had not committed, or yet had committed, or — well! I was at my wits' end and nearer fainting than anything. The inspector was quite human. 'You'd better not leave town, we won't get your warrant before to-morrow morning, but don't run away. We'd get you anyhow and it would only make things more awkward. And think about a nice confession. That will make things better.'

I do not know how many thousand times I went over every bit of the evidence that night, but I know it was one of the worst nights I have ever lived through. In the morning the syndic came to see me and I told him all I knew. He cheered me up, saying that for all the circumstantial evidence in the world he would never believe that I could go about robbing and murdering people. Then he went to see the police about it and I went on waiting for my arrest. After all an interesting case, but too interesting for my taste.

Only a few hours later the mystery was solved. The girl did not die after all, but made a surprisingly rapid recovery. She was conscious the next morning and gave the police another interview, stating that she had known me well for a long time and that I certainly was not the man who had attacked her. She must have mixed it up with my rather appealing appearance; as the assault actually took place only a few minutes after she had spoken to me. But that man looked quite different, she was certain about that. The money I could not account for was claimed by a fellow

student, who left it behind in an overall at my studio. He was a well-to-do young man who did not think much about carrying such sums loose in a pocket. There remained only my stick. I did not know it well enough to identify the one they showed to me. But mine had actually vanished. Practically everybody had access to the studio, but the only man we could think of who might have taken it was a stranger. And there had been a stranger about the place, a man we used to know who had been introduced by somebody at a dance. We found out that he had a very bad reputation indeed, so we saw little or nothing of him. He went away and returned on the morning of the day of the crime, when he appeared at lunch-time in our mess and tried to borrow money from several students. He received none and left, and was not seen again save by one of the students at the station the following day. I do not know whether the police followed up the clue nor what became of the whole thing, as I left Weimar soon afterwards. The cigarette girl soon recovered completely and we had a good laugh together about the story of how I murdered her. But I cannot help looking somewhat differently at murder trials and the submission of circumstantial evidence since then. What would have happened to me if the girl had died? Could I have blamed any judge for convicting me when I was on the point of believing myself that I had committed the crime?

When it became clear that the Bauhaus would have to leave Weimar, I decided not to go to Dessau where it was to be rebuilt. Obviously it had now reached the classical stage, having found its more or less definite shape, and would simply go on producing practical houses and serviceable objects. Without the authorization of the Bauhaus, I dare say that the question of style had been practically solved; that one cannot rule out certain forms developed by pure technical engineering such as aeroplanes, and that one has to put up with the fact that their shapes form a kind of natural aesthetic basis for any object produced. Ideas like

that of the 'dwelling machine' had lost much of their horror to normal citizens as it became more and more clear that together with the more formal aspects of the 'sober conception of the functions required', more human aspirations had to be acknowledged, and a recognition that it was not absolutely necessary for a sitting-room to look like an operating theatre.

I spent a short holiday in Italy before I made up my mind to go to Berlin for a while. The trip was not very eventful save for the one experience whose full significance I was not to assess until much later. It answered the question of how much and what aspects of totalitarian rule a normal tourist is able to observe. Well, people had a new way of saluting which was rather theatrical, but one got used to it. There were more uniforms in the streets than in normal countries in peace-time, and sometimes a spectacular parade. Italians as a rule were not too ready to discuss things with a stranger, but who is always ready to talk about his private affairs to a stranger? I made of course the famous observation that there were no more beggars and that the trains were running according to the time-table. Everybody seems to notice that in Fascist countries and people obviously think a lot of these things. But I think they are rather a big price to pay for the things the tourist does not see.

On my second trip to Italy I came across an amusing example of Fascist propaganda. My Italian is very limited indeed and it proved to be too limited to explain an intended change of route in the train. The guard listened patiently to my desperate efforts but did not understand at all. Behind the official there stood a young militiaman in smart uniform, and I wondered where he had won his numerous medals, as there certainly had been no war since he had left school. He was a very beautiful young man and seemed only to serve a decorative purpose, as he did not open his mouth for some time. It was not until I had given up the attempt to make myself understood, that he spoke to the guard in rapid

Italian, and immediately the man wrote out the changed ticket I wanted. I tried to thank the militiaman in Italian and received the answer in excellent German. 'You should not thank me, it was only my duty. That is why the Duce has commanded me to accompany the train, to help travellers. But you should learn Italian. Then you will have the advantage of reading our classics in their beautiful language.' It was irresistibly amusing, and all one could do was to congratulate the young man on his marvellous German. He grinned: '*Kunststück — wo ich in der Grenadierstrasse geboren bin.*' It turned out that he had been born in the Berlin Jewish quarter; a German Jew who emigrated as a child with his parents to Italy. This was in 1927.

In Berlin I looked for an artist's studio, not so much so that I could paint, but because they were about the only rooms with decent windows. The first room which Berlin landladies used to try to let was what is called a Berlin room, meaning a room usually found in the middle of the house and practically windowless. Generally windows in the older Berlin houses are too small for my liking. I found a suitable studio in an attic and did not think it necessary to explain why. So the landlady took me for an artist and I did not object. She was a typical Berlin woman, rather voluminous and friendly, and very kind-hearted within the boundaries of her principles. She surprised me by asking whether I was a naturalistic or a modern painter, and when I confessed I was rather modern if a painter at all, she said: 'Then you may take the studio. I don't care for naturalists because I don't like to have naked girls about the house.' A nice and a novel contribution to the discussion of modern art and a powerful argument for 'abstract' painters.

One of the first days of my stay I ran into an acquaintance of mine in the street. Asked to confirm a rumour, I admitted having worked for the Bauhaus stage department and so I was offered the stage designing for an organization called The Red Stage. I was to go to the address given, and to ask

for Herr X there and I would learn the rest. Herr X was already informed when I arrived. 'So you are the comrade from the Bauhaus stage. Look here, you will have to check this script, it's all in a mess. And don't engage more than five professional actors, the rest you simply have to take from the amateurs. About salaries you always talk directly to Torgler, at headquarters. You'll find the whole gang behind in the hall, they are only waiting for you. The playwright will be here any minute. Sorry, I must hurry away.' Out he went and I faced the crowd in the hall, holding a big bunch of paper, headed 'For the use of managing director only'.

It was no good pronouncing it all as a mistake. So I tried to get some idea of what it was all about. Nearly a hundred people were waiting for parts to be distributed, and it was surprising how many questions a director was expected to answer. But the whole crowd had discipline as well as enthusiasm and so the thing took shape surprisingly quickly. The idea was to run a show for the election campaign, in which old Marshal Hindenburg was standing for the office of Reich President against various candidates. There was not much hope of getting the Communist candidate in, but here we were, to do the utmost to help him. I did not think it at all an intelligent policy for the Communist Party to have a candidate of their own, and later when I met Torgler, we had a long conversation about it. He was not then at the head of the party and did not commit himself too much. Perhaps for reasons of party discipline he could not agree either when I ventured the question, why if there had to be a Communist candidate, they did not think of nominating Professor Korsch who would have been far more acceptable to people outside the party, while the members were certainly well enough disciplined to vote for any official candidate. The idea that the Social Democrats would be attracted by a 'proletarian' candidate was of course erroneous. A knowledge of the psychology of the opposition parties was never the strong point of

German politics. That section of organized labour in or sympathetic to the Social Democratic movement was trained in the worship of 'education' and would have accepted a university professor before anyone, and I know for certain that quite a number of Left-wing liberals would have joined in. In those years there was much talk of certain military circles being in close touch with the Russian army. Ideologies were not then as fixed as they now are, and theoreticians, only to be described as 'Right', were seriously considering the possibility of getting rid of the Versailles Treaty by the sovietization of Germany. Everyone knows that Marshal Hindenburg was elected, and later re-elected with the active help of the Social Democrats, and so was thus enabled to push the door ajar for National Socialism to get its foot in.

I saw Torgler frequently and he was one of my most pleasant acquaintances. A self-educated man of excellent manners, he was never given to the usual exaggerations of the average radical politician. No one could possibly be more clear-sighted and sober-minded than he always was, even in the most turbulent discussion, and his polite but cast-iron firmness used to impress opponents far more than the hot-headed enthusiastic shouting so frequent at political meetings. He was then concerned with the department for Proletarian Culture. So there was still another experiment in building up a *Kultur* to be observed, and this time on the largest scale possible. Since, according to the Marxist theory, civilization or culture is absolutely determined by the economic system, when economic conditions are changed one may expect a different culture. It might well be surprising to compare the features of cultural life in countries as opposed economically as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

The Red Stage then had not much to do with the theoretical side of the question. The show was meant to be propaganda, and good propaganda at that. Theory must look after itself. And after all, nobody could expect a Proletarian

Culture then in the highly capitalistic condition of Germany. So out of true political and not cultural theory, and very little means, we made a good show. My part in it was everything but designing. There was nothing to be designed, we just hired some properties from a film outfitter's shop and for the rest put up with the decorations to be found at the various beer-hall stages where we performed. A friend of mine built an ingenious plant for lighting which used to blow out even the strongest fuses, an effect which was usually taken for an essential part of the modern design, and the whole thing was very good fun. I had to take over a part in one of the sketches forming the show, that of a police captain, and was rather proud of a critic's fulsome praise. The joy was damped by a friend's remark, that it could not be very difficult to play an officer's part after having been something of the kind for years. To prove my acting ability I took the part of an elderly Social Democrat leader the next time and got my satisfaction. But this very part ended my career on the stage as well. One of our professionals never could be brought to learn his part properly, and in this play he was playing a 'white' army officer who had to shoot me. Usually I died quietly in the background, but one evening he cut out a few sentences and without waiting for the cue, shot me dead before I had time to vanish. Taken by surprise I fell down on the middle of the stage, and in a moment a crowd of revolting soldiers and recently liberated political prisoners rushed over my dead body, eyes fixed high on the red flag. They all wore heavy military boots, and my hands and face looked very convincingly wounded. The compassionate leader of the revolt at last ordered 'the corpse to be carried away and buried'.

We achieved naturalistic effects not only from the enthusiasm of our players, the public also played its part well. So it was difficult to find an actor ready to sacrifice himself in the part of a policeman in another sketch. It started with a workman flying through the audience, followed by the



uniformed policeman. The uniform bore only a slight resemblance to the one of the real police force, but frequently we had to rescue our actor from being stopped somewhat roughly.

One night a man stopped me behind the stage with the question: 'Are you comrade Piscator?' I said I was not, but he said, as I was directing the show I must be him. He showed me the advertisement in the *Red Flag*: 'Managing Director: Erwin Piscator.' Well, he, a Communist and a well-known director on a Berlin stage, had been appointed to run the show, but he had been unable to find the time to do so. I met him later when he came to see the performance and was glad to hear that he liked it. He was a very nice man, and talked about a really big theatrical company for a Left-wing Stage he was just about to found, for which he would take over the better part of our actors. He became famous when he actually opened his theatre, still without taking a single actor from us. Thanks to him I had the satisfaction of being mistaken for a famous man for a few weeks.

Berlin was not a very pleasant abode at this time. There was less solid ground than ever left to stand upon, either spiritual or economic. And it was certainly not a good place in which to sit down and digest the experiences of Loheland, the Bauhaus and the Red Stage. I tried to sit down quietly at work of a more scholarly nature, but I only succeeded in straining my nerves. So I decided to go back to the Rhoeen again for a while.

Now all ye peaceful regents of the night,  
 Silently gliding exhalations,  
 Languishing winds, and murmuring falls of waters.  
 Sadness of heart and ominous secureness,  
 Enchantments, dead sleeps, all the friends of rest,  
 That ever wrought upon the life of man,  
 Extend your utmost strength, and this charmed hour  
 Fix like the Centre.

GEORGE CHAPMAN

ONE or two nights in the clear and gentle atmosphere of Loheland which received me like the Prodigal Son, a few days spent walking over the hills, restored my inner equilibrium and made me feel at home in no time. The Rhœn was certainly a good choice, but I did not intend to stay at Loheland all the time. It would be better to have it as a friendly neighbour always ready to give me refuge. So I looked round for a cottage somewhere more remote and higher up.

It is the custom amongst the Rhœn farmers, when the old man of the farm gets too old to look after his land, for him to ceremoniously give the farm to his eldest son, and the new farmer has to make a contract with his parents — the *Ausgedinge*. He usually builds, as part of that contract, near his own house a very small cottage consisting of a minute lobby which serves as a kitchen, and two, or at the most, three rooms. There the old people live on an allowance of food and a little money until they die. For a person who knows the ways of the population it is quite easy to get one of these cabins, more especially as the old custom was already dying.

I found a cottage which suited my purpose splendidly. It was situated on top of a hill with a wonderful view over the

whole of the Rhoen, and the only neighbouring buildings were those of the original farm. Strictly speaking the cottage was a little farmstead of its own, having a pigsty and even a little barn attached and containing two fairly large rooms and a small one. I soon learned the story behind that exception. When I asked the old couple dwelling in the building opposite whether the cottage was to let they referred me to a man in a nearby village. But they did not think I would get the cottage, or rather, that I would take it. So I went to see the man and learn the story.

The cottage was originally built as part of the *Ausgedinge* of a widow who had insisted upon the barn and the pigsty and an unusually big allowance, thus driving her son into bankruptcy. A bad old woman obviously. But the son must have been a fool. Oh no, I learned, he was a very wise man. Because the old widow was a witch and heaven knows what might have happened to his farm had he not done everything she demanded. Well, I knew now what actually had happened to his farm, and the difference did not strike me as particularly important. But I did not press the point so as not to annoy my informant. Since the witch's death the cottage was supposed to be haunted and for that reason it had been empty ever since.

I have said before that the thing fitted my purpose but then I did not know that it would be so suitable. What better and more stylish quarters could be found for a man setting out to write a book about superstition! So I told the man earnestly that I did not mind as I myself understood a little bit about witchcraft — without practising it of course and being a God-fearing man — and that my dwelling in the haunted house might even break the spell. To that he agreed. But there was another obstacle. When the farm was sold nobody wanted to buy the cottage and so it became the much disputed property of nine different persons, some of the descendants of the unfortunate son living in the U.S.A., to which country quite a number of Rhoenlanders used to

emigrate before the war. But the man, being one of the heirs, did not think that anybody would object to my living there, especially if I did not mind repairing the decaying old den a bit. So I got my castle rent-free including a 'right of water' and the use of the orchard which ran wild behind the cottage. I received the key, about ten inches long and rather a weapon, and had my cases removed from Loheland.

The ground-sheet of a tent stuffed with straw was the first nucleus of my furniture and I spent the first night happily on it, tired from the first attempt at cleaning up the incredible mess in which I found the rooms. The witch did not pay any attention to her visitor. Possibly she had an important date with a wizard somewhere else. When my only neighbours paid me an early visit in the morning they had another explanation. Good Catholics like all the rest of the Rhoen people, they had previously nailed a small crucifix to the wall of the cottage-attic, though it was not their business to go into that house; it might help the poor soul, they said. In view of future visitors of the kind I wanted to attract, I took still another precaution and drew nice pentagrams in the traditional manner on every threshold.

The very next day it worked — if not by keeping out evil spirits, by drawing in a man who might have been anything from a robber captain to a poacher. He wore enormous moustaches, carried a shotgun and as I had not yet a chair to offer, sat down on the floor in the matter-of-fact way and with the grace of a savage native. He turned out to be nothing more savage and dangerous than the carpenter of the nearby hamlet who held a shooting licence. Besides, this visit was the substitute for a press interview. My visitor performed the honorary function of a living newspaper for a very wide area and wanted to break all the news about the new-comer to his clients. He pretended not to believe in my witch, but appreciated my precautions nevertheless.

'I have seen many strange things as a travelling artisan in my youth and it is always wise to be on the safe side,' he

told me. His knowledge of magic relics and superstitions was remarkable, but he had too much imagination and too much sense of humour to make him a pure enough source for my purposes. At the same time he was a very pleasant entertainer. In another matter he became very helpful, as we agreed upon a practical exchange: I had to give violin lessons to his little daughter and he repaid me in timber and the use of his tools and workshop. The growing stock of furniture of my own make which resulted from this transaction became another attraction for visitors, which in turn meant more violin lessons in exchange for bacon, butter, potatoes and eggs. I went so far as to build myself a simple weaving-frame of the kind they used in Loheland and made soft-coloured coverings in the Loheland style for my chairs and, indeed, even a carpet. My ambition flourished and I painted in gaudy lettering on one of my studio walls Horace's ode 'Integer vitae . . .' and some colour being left I adorned the wall opposite with a dancing Shiva. The consequence was that I had to act several times as a mural artist, and exotic themes were quite as popular as agricultural ones with my peasant customers. I could have settled down quite comfortably as a teacher of all the fine arts or something like that, but there was still another profession waiting for me, and that rather an uncomfortable one.

I used to work on my book in the early morning hours and to exchange friendly greetings with my neighbours when the old woman put their only cow in the cart directly beneath my window. She was very old indeed and so was the cow, and the harnessing always took a long time, but though I sometimes offered help it was never accepted. One morning the two old females somehow came into collision — without any bad intentions on either side. But as it was the point of the cow's horn and the woman's cheek which collided there was a bad scratch on the one side. The poor old one screamed, the scratch was bleeding heavily, the cow certainly was sorry but did not say so. I rushed out and this



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time the woman was not too proud to accept help. She was badly shocked and tolerated the cleaning and dressing of the wound. When, however, the first shock was over she insisted on joining her husband in the field. I told her that the cheek would swell and bleed again, but nothing could stop her. Of course she came back after a short while with an eye closed and the nice clean dressing all red and displaced, and very frightened of bleeding to death. I lectured her a bit about perfect behaviour in a patient, but as the poor old thing was frightened out of her wits I could not stop her crying and fussing around. The only means left was to tell her that I could stop the bleeding immediately by a wound-benediction if only she would sit still for a moment. I knew of course several of these old naive rhymes and in this case one of them even worked, as it gave me the opportunity of changing the dressing, which was the only thing required. The actual bleeding had stopped long before; it was just that the dressing was red. To get her to rest, at least for the time being, I ordered a number of rosaries to be said. This certainly calmed her mind and was the only means of keeping her sitting in the chair. After that first success she willingly submitted to be treated on the following days and recovered very quickly. Towards the end of my treatment she had to go to town on some business or other and I advised her to include a visit to the doctor. She went there and the surgeon told her the wound was perfectly all right and he could not have treated her more expertly. At her first church-going after the accident she repeated the learned man's opinion to all the villagers, this being the only opportunity of seeing her widely scattered neighbours. In this way my fame as a surgeon was born.

I soon had plenty of cases, mostly injuries but sometimes other kinds of sickness, and though I had some experience in medicine and nursing I always advised would-be patients to see the doctor first of all. But there was no doctor. The only one in reach was some miles away and the district nurse



was not very much nearer either. Simple remedies would have helped in nearly all the cases but I soon found out that my practice to be really operative had to be run on lines similar to those on which I had seen medicine practised in Java. Simple people do not want simple treatment, but at least some hocus-pocus; and nobody believes in a medicine unless it tastes bitter. Then there was that unfortunate wound-benediction in my first case; and the remark I had dropped about witchcraft when I took the cottage; and the many conversations about the same kind of thing in my search for material for my book — it soon became difficult to live up to my fame as a witch-doctor. I did my very best to disperse the general belief in my supernatural powers, only to see my protestations received with cunning smiles. Of course, nobody wants to admit knowledge of, or faith in, such things — ‘we are all good Catholics here’. I once talked about this problem to one of the monks in a nearby monastery and he took rather a sound view. In his opinion no damage was done as long as one did not pretend to practise ‘black’ magic, and a few invocations of saints, even in the irregular form of obsolete wound-blessings, could not possibly do any harm. The reverend father was, by the way, an extremely well-educated man with a wide knowledge of modern art and philosophy and I took much pleasure in accompanying him when he went round the hamlets and lonely farms begging.

The most interesting, and the safest, cases of ‘magic healing’ were the removal of warts. Later I got full confirmation from a very expert quarter. There is a general belief that warts can be removed either by magic formulae or by a practice which is usually performed by touching the growth with a piece of fat bacon or an onion which is afterwards buried. There are more details as to the burying by the light of the waning moon — one knows all this, if not from another source, from Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*. I tried any known form, it was always a success. So I started experimenting systematically, first leaving out one part or

other of the performance and then substituting one part after another by self-invented practices. The purely suggestive character of the treatment was, if that were necessary, gloriously proved. Warts even vanished by smearing them with pure water if only I told the patient it was a medicine — or magic water.

Anyway, these people were of such an astonishing vitality that I doubt very much whether they needed a doctor at all. The most extraordinary case was that of a farmer who came to see me with a blood-red piece of cloth tied round his head which, together with his wild white locks and fine old features, gave him the appearance of a savage priest. He complained about headaches, especially in hot weather. When I questioned him I found out that his skull had been fractured a year before by a swede thrown from a cart. Well, it had ached like blazes and he had vomited, but it became better by and by and now there was only this headache. A handkerchief tied round the head was a relief, but it did not quite dispel the pain. When I touched his forehead I could feel the healed fracture like a step a quarter of an inch high. I prescribed a light diet and a light household laxative and he assured me later that the headaches were much better. He was so old that he could not give his exact age and I am certain he is still alive and over a hundred now. Myself apart, he had never before seen a doctor in his life.

And then there was the case which definitely established my fame as the greatest medical man alive, and I still feel my knees weaken when I think of it. The man came to the cottage alone, his arm supported by a woman's head-kerchief. He had a little injury on his hand and — a wonderfully clear case of blood-poisoning. What else could I do but tell him to get a doctor by any means and at all costs, as quickly as possible? Useless advice. He had just seen a doctor and had been told that only immediate amputation could save him. But the man liked the idea as little as I had liked the same

proposition in Potsdam, and preferred to die if that was the only alternative. Still, why should he not try the witch-doctor before dying? I told him I was nothing of the kind and would he, please, go and be amputated at once, the sole effect of which was to send him into a rage and set him off into a torrent of very elaborate bad language. Then he turned on his heel, accused me of being responsible for his death, and went off. I could not feel very affably towards him but something had to be done. Yet what could one do? I remembered a similar case a doctor had told me about and the folk-remedy he had employed. Dared I resort to it? I simply had to. So I went after my man, overtook him, put him to bed, and packed his hand, arm and shoulder in blue potter's clay. Either it was not really blood-poisoning, which is not very likely, or it was a miracle which is still less likely, or blue potter's clay is in fact as good as amputation. Anyway the man recovered and kept his arm. One can easily imagine the result of this success — the doctors knowing no better than to cut off that arm and I . . . As a strict rule I never accepted money, eggs or potatoes for my medical aid, but in this case it was rather a job to prevent the man giving me anything short of half his kingdom. At least and at last I had to accept a drink in the village pub, and I do not remember who accepted the last drink from whom. The whole hamlet got gloriously drunk and that means something in those parts. Bless the vital power of the Rhoenlanders!

The Rhoen is certainly a lonely country and very thinly populated, and I had chosen the most remote spot. But I hardly ever met a greater number of interesting people or a greater variety of activity. There was, of course, Loheland and the world's first Glider Camp on the Wasserkuppe; but besides these well-known institutions the hills seemed to attract all sorts of odd people, and the character and climate of these parts must be extremely well suited to mental and bodily activity. There were the monks of the different orders, hard-working men who besides their manifold religious and

more worldly duties always found time for scientific pursuits and were always ready to spend their valuable hours for discussion with a curious and interested stranger. The abbot of one of the smaller monasteries, for instance, not only supervised the brewing of the very best beer I ever tasted, but was an extraordinary scholar in folklore, and, besides, had brought together a fine collection of the oldest German ecclesiastical and folk music, which he used to play with virtuosity on his lute. Certainly any university would have been proud of him as a teacher of philosophy and ecclesiastical history. The counterpart was worthily represented by the only Protestant parson in the Rhoen who struggled with zeal and wide theological knowledge to keep his little flock together and was more than willing to discuss matters — a man shaped after the pattern of warrior priests of the time of the Reformation. He was certainly a most honest character, but though I am not a Catholic myself, I never could help but see him as a rebel son partially blinded by his love-borne hatred against an understanding and wise mother, the latter, of course, being impersonated by the friendly abbot. In the matter of religion I think it is impossible to convince people by argument of any kind. We appear to tend to credit a religion with a convincing personality.

There was still another community's representative ready to give information and to put up with discussion. He was the Jewish teacher living in a nearby village. Quite a number of Jews had settled in the Rhoen, and, what was quite an exception in Germany, some of them were small landowners, farming in the same style as the rest of the population. Nobody in those days had the slightest feeling against them. Teaching and acting as a rabbi was only a sideline with this man, as he was a cattle-dealer and owned a small farm run by his brothers and their family. One of the wives ran a little general store as well and they all had to work hard to make both ends meet. Several times I spent the Sabbath eve with the family and was always deeply impressed by the friendly

atmosphere of joyful piety. The teacher was a great scholar, an expert Talmudist, and had an interesting knowledge of old Hebrew music. At harvest-time they were short of hands and I went down to help them. The rhythmical work of mowing sometimes led to a lesson in music, so that often we stood together swinging our scythes and singing Hebrew psalms.

The harvest is always followed by the great festival of the year in all these villages and I joined in quite a number of their dances. The biggest one was held in a village, which, in fact, since medieval times had held the freedom of a city. My greatest friend there was the jailer of the small and usually empty prison; a fat and good-hearted man, who at our first meeting in the village pub told me that I should see him in winter, 'it's lonely now with my wife only, but then we always have the company of a few tramps who do a bit of stealing or such-like to have shelter for the cold months and we always have a nice time sitting together round the fire'. I went, and we really had an enjoyable time, all together in his kitchen.

To make the High Mass on the feast day specially solemn the parish priest asked me whether I would play the violin in church for that occasion and I gladly agreed; whereupon he promised to get a specially good organist to accompany me. The man, he told me, was so good that we would not need a rehearsal. So, after some difficulty, I communicated with the man by telephone and we agreed upon a piece by Bach. I then remembered that Bach was a Protestant, but it was too late to change and nobody minded. But the organist turned out to be a Protestant as well and I only found this out when he asked my advice about the playing of the liturgical parts. I knew exactly nothing about it but we managed somehow, and I am certain God enjoyed the music as much as the congregation, who did not seem to notice anything unusual.

A dancing floor was erected on the slope of a hill as there

is hardly a square yard of level ground to be found in the village. In the middle of the band sat a young man in townish clothes armed with the bass drum and the other percussion instruments of the modern dance-band — an astonishing sight amongst the village musicians. His had been rather a vivid career: Royal Academy of Music — a bad affair; playing a violoncello in a millionaires' hotel in Egypt; French Foreign Legion; and there he was, home again and in the village band. Many strangers had come to the festival and I met three young lady artists spending their holiday hiking and painting in the hills. One of them was a Turk studying painting on a state scholarship, who looked like a princess of the Arabian Nights dressed in Paris. I saw her often afterwards staggering over the stony hills on the highest Parisian heels and in a snow-white overall, strange and unpractical equipment for the rough country. When the dance was really in full swing — and the Rhoenlanders really swing their dances — the floor gave way and the whole party rolled downhill. Everybody agreed that this was the finest joke since the foundation of the village — pardon, the city!

During these weeks I had a young artist staying as a guest in the cottage and when the three girls became frequent visitors, the house developed into a painting academy. I took up painting again myself so that when I left the Rhoen later I brought down not only a large manuscript but a number of pictures as well, which, still later, found their way back to the countryside in a strange manner. Another consulting member of our academy was a young man whose type would hardly be possible at another time and in another part of the world. He lived in a cottage similar to mine about three-quarters of a mile away. His one and only purpose was to meditate about the ideal lamp. Just literally meditating. There was no sketching or designing, let alone experimenting with materials. He just spent his days thinking deeply about the idea of the lamp. It is of course possible to start thinking from any point and to reach, eventually, any

other point, however remote, so he made pleasant contributions to our conversations. Perhaps the most astonishing thing is that after a year or so of hard meditation he rejoined the profane world and constructed a really practicable lamp, which made a lot of money. He definitely outstripped me in another matter.

My witch was a disappointment and never haunted the cottage. But in his den something happened one night which I will simply report without attempting to offer any explanation. I was all by myself and asleep when he called on me and asked me, obviously in a rather disturbed state of mind, to accompany him to his house. Somebody seemed to be inside blocking the door. I sleepily advised him to go back and offer the poor tramp — what else could it be? — pardon for intruding and a cup of tea and shelter for the night. But my friend, very excited, insisted on my going with him. The night was pitch-dark and cold and I kept on dropping ironical remarks about the poor man sheltering in the cottage. The house contained the usual lobby-kitchen and one larger room whose only door led to the lobby. We lit a candle on the hearth-rug in the lobby and I tried the door. The worn-out lock had no key, but someone inside was obviously blocking our way by leaning against the door. It could be opened to a certain extent but the small cleft was immediately closed again by a strong pressure. I tried to parley with that pressure but received no answer. So we left it at that for a moment. We held a council of war and decided to arm ourselves with handy logs from the fireplace and after a last ultimatum to force the door at all costs. But when the ultimatum had been shouted through the door there came an answer. Not a human voice, but a sound I shall never forget: a sound which seems to play an important role in ghost stories. Its exact description would be, a birch-broom sweeping the door inside. That sounds rather homely but it did not appear so to us though I can hardly explain why. It was a creepy noise and I did not like it at all. I wished

that we had, at least, my friend's ideal lamp instead of the candle. We certainly were not satisfied with remaining in ignorance of what was behind the door, so we jumped against it and forced our way inside. There was no resistance whatever this time and we nearly fell into the room. And that is all that is to tell. There was no living nor dead being, not even something resembling a birch-broom. The room contained only the hermit's furniture, a mattress and a chest. And all the windows were locked on the inside. It was only afterwards that I succeeded in drawing my neighbours out on the manifestations of the alleged ghost in my cottage. They told me it was a noise similar to that of a sweeping birch-broom. It was definitely an ugly noise.

The days must have had more than the usual twenty-four hours in the Rhoen, for besides my many professions and my proper work I had to cook my meals — a task I liked to complete with care and some refinement — and to do my washing and house-cleaning. And though a lonely man changing for dinner in the desert usually appeals to people's sense of humour, I always found it very comfortable, and helpful in some way, to change into a clean linen suit in the evenings, a relic of the Java times, from the old bags and pullover. Except for shoes, in which I followed the Rhoen custom of going about the house in a kind of sock, and outside in clogs. And besides all that I led a lively social life. There was the old shoemaker in a neighbouring hamlet, very proud of having been the model for a saint's image in the parish church: he used to ask me to come round after evensong and play the accordion, and I always found a party of at least a dozen children there as listeners. The consequence was that their parents, in winter-time, wanted me to play at the many house-parties. One of the farmers I played for lived in a small but very fine medieval hall, or what was left of it, and he proposed to engage me as his story-teller. Good lodging and food and plenty of Schnapps and tobacco for nothing more than telling him stories and all about the



world I knew. What could be more alluring? I did not, however, accept his offer.

Two young students, who spent a holiday of several months in a near-by cottage, left their den only on Sundays to have a few, but not *very* few, drinks at the village pub. But they heartily welcomed visitors. The only room contained two mattresses and a big table in between. On each mattress a pipe-smoking man reclined and on the table was an enormous pot of thick soup on a charcoal fire and the kettle for tea. One's supply of soup could be replenished continuously without leaving the couches and so could the tea. The whole scheme was cunningly arranged so that the menial duties of the household should take away the minimum from the time to read the whole of the Bible and to discuss every chapter, a task not so common in Germany where few people have read entirely through it. I think they were undergraduates of Würzburg University and one of them wrote very good poetry.

Once on a long walk of several miles I ran into an old acquaintance of mine, Marie Buchhold, once the heart and soul of the Free Community of Craftsmen in Darmstadt, who in the meantime had taken the last step in a development not unusual in these circles and had acquired a small farm to run a *Siedlung*. I use the German word for settlement because at that time it was only in use for a thing I shall have to explain more circumstantially.

I have previously spoken about the German Youth Movement, Wandervogel and the *Freideutsche Jugend*, about Muck's Millennium in Thuringia and, besides them, of many other odd people and things which seem to have nothing to do with each other. In a technical sense they have not. There was no central organization to unite all the different movements, associations and individuals, there was not even a common name one could use to describe the widespread brotherhood. But a brotherhood it was and the unnamed conception seems to me the key to many German riddles.

The members had no badge or token to recognize each other by, but somehow they seemed to know who belonged to them. And whoever belonged to 'it' was a brother and could count on a friendly reception and help, sometimes to an astonishing degree. Frequently in the years following the war total strangers called on me, taking for granted they could stay for a chat and a meal and one or several nights' shelter. And I often had the same hospitality from total strangers, without belonging to anything other than 'it'. There was no recognized difference in faith, race, class or anything else. It was only later on that political differences arose and made 'it' impossible. But that and the consequences belong to a later chapter.

Now there was a typical development amongst these different groups forming the brotherhood which led to the *Siedlungen*, with varying tasks, but having the same stimulus. When a young boy became, for instance, a Wandervogel, he had to do so against the strong opposition of his school and his parents. This was before the war, and parents did not at all like the idea of their boys and girls roving and camping about the countryside without proper supervision, in some cases in mixed groups. The elders were hardly to blame for that but they were nevertheless wrong in their fears. If they had had the opportunity to compare say, the normal atmosphere of the Cadet Corps or other boarding-schools with the one of the Wandervogel-camps, they would not have been able to deny the advantages of the Wandervogel *milieu*. Anyway the child became conscious of the sweet and dangerous importance of being a rebel and responded with rebellion. Now the natural history of movements is always the same. Once things begin to move somewhere they always drag with themselves bordering ideas and groups of some affinity, and weaker movements like to be tugged by movements whose turn it is to do the tugging. Of course the Wandervogel, like nearly all the movements calling themselves young and new, had from the beginning the character of a

renaissance. One did not like the present state of affairs, and of course it was called the 'old' state because obviously the elders were responsible for it. What should be put in its place? — Something still older. So, not unusually, the revolution being a reaction against something turned out reactionary itself. The Youth Movement brought with it a pleasant revival of folk-song and dance, peasant costumes and a boom in reproductions of medieval pictures amongst other things. It developed quite a style of its own, and the young boy found some difficulty in applying that style to his personal domestic surroundings against the parents' opposition. Old peasants' furniture and as little as possible was the most widespread general idea. Further, the boy wanted to wear shorts. It seems incredible nowadays, but they were a sensation in the streets and were prohibited in most schools. And he wanted small parties of his friends to come and sing folk-songs or to play old tunes on lutes, flutes and violins. Only very rarely could these wishes be fulfilled at home. Well, if you cannot convert your surroundings, go away if you do not want to live like the rest. The young people found some empty room or other, decorated it according to their taste and started living their idea of the right kind of life there. This was called a Nest and the next step was to create a nest in a romantic old hut in the country, preferably the tower of a ruined castle or something similar, and call it the Country Home. There matters rested when war broke out. Foundations like the Free Community of Craftsmen were the next step to gain independence from the usual kind of people and their lives, whence another consequent idea arose. To live mentally independent is at least easier in the country, and the only way to become as economically independent as possible, is to own land and to work on it. The popularity of the idea was particularly underlined by the war, and the end of the war coincided with the growing up of the broad mass of the Wandervogel and other people belonging to 'it'.

It is certainly in the German character to treat things seriously. They say that cricket is a national religion with the English, but there is hardly anything which cannot become a religion with the Germans. Buddhists know that the only real way to follow the Path is to retire into a monastery, and the best likeness to the German *Siedlung* is a Buddhist convent, which forms, for the same reasons, something like the self-supporting estates of the pre-industrial period. There were *Siedlungen* for everything. A dozen different kinds of true Christianity, dozens of other true religions, free-thinking, vegetarianism, the growing of specially pure food, breathing, dancing — it is impossible to recount all the ideals which called for a more or less monastic life and economic independence.

Many if not most of the *Siedlungen* had no formulated purpose. The basic idea was: things cannot go on like this and we have to find something else. So let us avoid as far as possible any foreign influence, work on the land therefore and see what comes out of it. I am afraid I do not remember what Marie Buchhold's idea was, if there was one. But she and her followers worked like slaves on the farm in the Rhoen, growing fruit and vegetables, breeding small cattle, spinning and weaving. They all looked rather tired but healthy and merry. The furniture was a delightful cross-breed of old country and primitive, home-made things. The Rhoenlanders, at first mistrustful, by and by got accustomed to the strangers and their ways, and gradually Marie Buchhold built up a number of classes where various subjects of interest to peasants were taught and discussed. It is, by the way, astonishing in how many cases women were the initiators of such foundations.

Marie Buchhold's *Siedlung* seemed to be a perfectly sound and honest enterprise but there were, of course, other and rather unpleasant cases. Sometimes a farm on the edge of bankruptcy was turned into a *Siedlung* and made to pay its way by the unpaid work of young idealists; and sometimes

even worse things happened. I remember one case, which in certain respects resembled Muck's Thuringian adventures. When I met the man in question shortly after the war, he was a Catholic of somewhat affected piety. He was married but volunteered the information that his marriage had nothing to do with, as he put it, worldly lust. A few years later I met him again. He had left the Church and his former profession which was, I think, book-selling, and had bought a bankrupt farm. All the farm-hands were young girls, and very pretty ones too. I do not remember the couple's real Christian names but remember vividly the surprise I felt when I heard them addressed as Mary and Joseph, a change which obviously hinted at very doubtful taste. I found an astonishing number of pictures and sculptures representing the Holy Family and a strange candle-lit and incense-smelling atmosphere. The impression given did not lack a certain beauty; it was a bit too fanciful and somewhat overheated for my liking, but that obviously was their business and nothing seemed to be really wrong with the place, though there was something very much wrong with it. I got the rest of the story from the parish priest, who had it from a girl who had been through it and a personal friend of the then deceased Joseph. Mary and Joseph's vow of chastity had developed into a blasphemous madness, the crooked ways of which are hard to explain. Mary was to bear a Messiah-child but of course to preserve her virginity. So another girl was to be substituted to do the material part of the bearing, and by a similar process Joseph had to act as the progenitor. The couple had been convincing enough to make quite a number of girls believe in that monstrosity, and after a while it was always stated that the unfortunate young mother for some reason or other did not fit the purpose after all. I am inclined to believe that there really was not much 'worldly lust' in the whole madness and certainly there was a cruel punishment for the girls who were too ashamed to do anything but vanish without telling

anybody. The thing went on for a couple of years until the last candidate was more furious than ashamed and told the world all about it. It was a big scandal as far as it went, but then it was hushed up because the man died suddenly. Of course such outrages were few and exceptional, but they somehow fit in with the whole style.

Very significantly we have in this case still another example of the idea of expecting everything from the birth of a new Messiah. It seems to arise quite naturally in a period of utter distress and hopelessness. The interesting feature of all these Messiah schemes seems to me to be that they all had something to do with *Aufartung*. Even in the case of Mary and Joseph, the religious terminology was liberally mixed with Racist slogans, and you remember Muck Lamberty's theory.

The tendency to fall for the idea of conceiving a Messiah child was doubtless supported by the general rise of the longing for fertility which seems to be one of nature's tricks after a war. Observers of post-war Germany usually point out the increase of birth control in this country. They probably will in most cases not have had close enough contact with private lives to be able to notice the almost religious craving for descendants amongst young people. Another reason for overlooking this fact might be that observations of that kind were mostly carried on in Berlin, where things were somewhat different and not necessarily typical of the general attitude.

When I left the Rhoeu it was winter, and as everything there is slightly exaggerated, it was a very hard winter, barring all communication with friends and neighbours by snow and impenetrable fogs. The small iron stove was heroically struggling against the cold, but without much success. As nobody wanted my home-made furniture I burned it by and by, and spent my last night there, like the first, in an empty room on the straw-stuffed ground-sheet. The stove, by the way, was a capricious young thing and

sometimes rather obstinate, but once successfully kindled it burnt radiantly and cheerfully. So we had to invent a female form for the German word for stove, which is originally male, when we talked about Titine, as we christened her. I am afraid I sold Titine for scrap-iron after the last square meal of furniture she consumed.

A friend who was the director of an art gallery in a Thuringian town wanted to exhibit the pictures I had accidentally painted in the Rhoen, and I wanted some town-atmosphere anyway to give the final touch to the manuscript about superstition. The work and the waiting for the exhibition gave me an excuse to visit another friend and I went to Halle on the Saale. Apart from the gruesome dialect this was a pleasant and industrious town with remarkable parks and an Art Academy which in many regards could compete with the Bauhaus. The short stay in Halle helped me to a curious experience.

I had made friends with an enterprising young architect who one day called on me and asked whether I could not oblige him by selling a few pictures to a wealthy customer. Nothing could have been more welcome, so he selected three of my paintings and we agreed upon a fair price, my friend acting as the customer's proxy. The story behind the deal was that my friend had been commissioned to do the fittings for a gambling club, and the employers had given him a free hand to furnish the rooms with a few pictures. They accepted our price without bargaining, but neither my friend nor I received the promised cheque. So one day the architect turned up again at my place with a startling proposition. I was not allowed to raise any objection, everything was already agreed upon: as there was no chance of getting our money otherwise, the club had to engage both of us as directors so that we were not only to draw a salary from that position but would be able to subtract the money owed by instalments. I had a first-class laugh but accepted. So we became gambling directors. The club was as respectable as

its kind can be, the game was *écarté* with *chouette*, which at that time was legal in Prussia, whereas other parts of Germany regarded it as mere hazard and banned it. A strangely mixed crowd of upright business men, professional gamblers and open crooks assembled on the premises nightly, and the main purpose of the two new directors was to reduce cheating to a minimum. There was an astonishing number of such clubs everywhere in Germany at that time and our club organized a regular bus-service at midnight from Leipzig to Halle, as the authorities in Saxony introduced a closing-time for gambling clubs at this hour. The biggest irony was that I have to confess to the social crime of not liking card games of any kind and therefore I was never able to understand the game exactly. At last we completed the collecting of our cash instalments and resigned. Only a few weeks later a commodious chest was delivered at my studio containing the pictures I had sold to the club. The covering letter said that following new gambling laws the club was about to be voluntarily dissolved and the secretary begged me to accept the pictures as a token of gratitude for my help in keeping the crooks in check. I had my doubts as regards the voluntariness of the dissolution, but as the honourable secretary was nowhere to be found in Halle I took the pictures and sold them a second time later.

Looking through my manuscript, by and by, I came to the conclusion that I had made such a fundamental mistake in its basic conception that I would practically have to rewrite the whole of it. Still, the work was not quite useless and had been an excuse for a wonderful time and many nice experiences in the Rhoe. One does not mind a professional disappointment too much — it is all in the game — but funnily enough one does not easily put up with a disappointment when a hobby is concerned. So it made me very angry when the promised exhibition was held up. Besides, the weather was horrible and the industrial air in Halle unbearable. Spring came, but without sunshine, and I went to the



Bergstrasse. The word means literally hill-road and the part so called was actually an old Roman highway along the Odenwald hills where they slope suddenly down to the plains of the Rhine. In certain respects it is a German Cornwall as the climate is much milder than the rest of the country; only there are fig trees and palm trees to be found, roses grow in wonderful plenty and the walls round the vineyards with their small whitewashed cottages sometimes add a surprisingly Cornish touch to the landscape. Before the war the Bergstrasse used to be a favourite refuge for retired army officers and state officials, famous for its quietness. Then the usual development set in; hotels were built in every village offering the kind of entertainment one can get everywhere else and spoiling the advantages one could formerly only obtain on the Bergstrasse. Of course the poor elegance of the new places was unable to compete with the better-known and better-fitted places, and the hotels went more or less bankrupt. It seems to be the sad but inevitable fate of all the beauty-spots in the world.

Before going there I made a short excursion to Stuttgart in order to attend a meeting of the Anthroposophical Society which was running one of the most remarkable modern schools there. I have seen quite a number of modern experimental schools, some of which were really excellent in methods and results, but if I had had a child at that time in Germany I should certainly have sent it to the Waldorf School. Anthroposophy like any other philosophy or religion might be open to criticism as such, but such results as those to be seen in the health, knowledge and behaviour of the Waldorf School children could not be explained away. The same might be remarked at this point of the surprising results on the various farms run on anthroposophic lines.

On the Bergstrasse I found the most romantic and lovely place to live in. It was a complete little villa in the middle of a big garden, overgrown with yellow roses and containing a living-room, bedroom and kitchen. The only objection I

might have raised, if indeed it could be regarded seriously, was the fact that to pass through the doors I had to bend almost double, and I was easily able to touch the ceiling. For the house was built as a toy for children similar to the one built for the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose. The children had by this time grown up and their mother lived with her second husband in the main building built in the most saddening style as a 1900-architect's dream of a castle, whereas my villa showed the cheerful and more simple lines developed on the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt.

The Mathildenhöhe used to be a settlement of artists of all kinds founded by the last Grand-Duke of Hesse, Ernst Ludwig. I became an intimate friend of one of the former members of that foundation living not far from my place in another village on the Bergstrasse. His name was Daniel Greiner and he looked exactly like a twin-brother of Balzac's. In many respects he was a remarkable man to whom I shall always be grateful for the wonderful times I was allowed to spend in his home and for many valuable and stimulating ideas. This home of his was nearly a *Siedlung* of its own. He had purchased an old water-mill complete with farmyard and stables and barns and converted it into a kind of artists' hall. There he lived, a reigning patriarch, amidst a large family of children, grandchildren and in-laws. Long before the war he had been one of the Hessian artists selected to be the Grand-Duke's brother-artists on the Mathildenhöhe, where the Prince kept his own studio and gave free rein to his love of stage-designing. At that time Greiner had been a painter, later he took up sculpture as well, and I think that the best of his work consisted of his wood-cuts. I hardly ever came across a less materialistic man, but this idealistic enthusiast joined the Communist Party after the war and was elected a member of the Hessian diet. The House almost made it a custom not to attend the speeches of Communist members but they made an exception when Greiner spoke. I think the only Communist motions ever

accepted were his; they usually asked for better working conditions or were pleas on behalf of the ex-service men or were concerned with similar subjects.

The buildings of his 'hall' were adorned with immense wall-paintings of his own, showing subjects like 'The United Workers of Brain and Fist Following the Red Flag' or scenes from country life, and the outer walls were simply covered with these decorative and powerful pictures. I shall never forget the big and heavy man sitting before the background of such a harvest-scene in the sun and carefully cracking eggs into an earthen bowl whose dimensions were commensurate to the size of the community. During this peaceful occupation he wisely expounded why in his opinion the members of a political party should be selected carefully and should form something akin to a religious order. One bad man, he explained, could disgrace the whole party and do no end of damage. The bowl was nearly filled to the brim when from one of the eggs a greenish evil-smelling sauce splashed into the bowl. 'You cannot ask for a better proof', Greiner said, smiling, and carried the bowl to the pigsty.

The eldest son was christened, if that word fits the case, after the old Germanic god Odin, and the girls had names in similar style; one of the younger boys, a really lovable ginger-head, was called Rembrandt. Even in Germany it had been a hard struggle to induce the local registrar to accept these unusual names. But if Greiner set his mind on a thing he usually succeeded. In spite of the fact that he was a Communist Member of the Reichstag and did not profess any particular religion he used to be very popular with many parsons, and a great number of Hessian churches are decorated with his mural paintings, reredos and carved pulpits. Of course the Evangelical Church in Hesse at that time had reached a degree of liberalism which in order not to violate their conscience went so far as to abandon the General Confession at the installation of parsons. Anyway, they were good pictures.

Greiner liked my paintings and encouraged me to take up art more seriously. My proper interest in painting was such as to preclude discussion with practising artists. They usually start the argument from the basis of taking the existence of art for granted and beyond discussion. Of course they are right and one cannot possibly expect to convert a painter by arguments so that he stops what an artist-friend of mine used to describe as a pleasant disease. Still, psycho-analysis has something to say of that, and on the other hand, Moses' Law; and there are quite a number of teachings and observations concerned with it. I think that one simple mistake is mainly responsible for the shallowness of our discussion about art: that we apply the term to very different things which obviously have little in common. As a rule a handy definition for that mongrel-term is easily found, practicable enough for endless chatter and nobody wishes to bother about looking for the real common denominator. So Greiner and I provisionally agreed upon the pleasant-disease theory and just stuck to the observation of symptoms. The interest in the reactions of non-prejudiced people to art and the wish to teach them how to get some pleasure out of it, mingling with the intention to open new markets for the artists, resulted in the birth of a new kind of exhibition.

We did not foresee the amount of work or success which resulted from Greiner's asking all the painters in Hesse to send pictures and drawings to be exhibited in villages and very small towns. The converted barns began to fill with canvases of every kind, form and description, and Greiner's secretary's days were full, filing and answering letters about the exhibition. There was some opposition amongst the artists, too, mainly arising from the total absence of any declared programme. We accepted everyone who was a member of the Artists' Union, membership of which did not imply that his work was of a certain standard, or gave any indication as to the particular '-ism' to which he was addicted, since the objects of the Union were strictly economic. And

we got them all: revolutionary young people with a programme, friendly old ladies painting flowers and windmills, Academists and surrealists and all the rest. Later, when success made us still more daring, we even admitted amateurs if we thought their paintings interesting enough. The name of the man leading the opposition at the beginning unintentionally exposed their standpoint; it was Posh. But even he came in eventually and so we went to the country.

The land of Hesse, especially the southern part, is full of minute principalities. The numerous counts and princes, long ago deposed, before the war held a position similar to that of a British Peer and were now just landed gentry. Still, the villagers looked upon themselves as subjects of a sort of Reigning Count, or whatever the title was. The princely residences were usually fine examples of the old and oldest architecture set in beautiful parks. At some of these residences a kind of court was held, complete with equerry and chamberlain, titles which led to a ridiculous guerrilla warfare between such noble households and the republican authorities. As the title of a Reigning Count could only have been obtained during the time of the Holy Roman Empire from the Emperor by claiming, amongst other conditions, the possession of at least three cities, there were several villages like the one in the Rhoen holding the Freedom of a City.

As the main purpose of our scheme was to help artists, from whom little if any financial help was to be expected, to sell their pictures, we had to cut down expenses to a minimum. And so we did. The eldest Greiner boy and I went hiking into the Odenwald to reconnoitre and we found a glorious reception prepared. We very easily got the Herr Bürgermeister and the parson and the teacher interested in our plans; sometimes they set up a committee at the first meeting, for in Germany a committee there must always be and plenty of organization. They usually bestowed a small sum in cash and all kinds of help on the exhibition. There was always someone who would lend a lorry for the transport of

the pictures, sometimes it was only a peasant's cart drawn by the small brown cows of the country; and the village notabilities led by the publican took much pride in helping the progress of culture by putting us up and feeding us to bursting-point.

We had all kinds of improvised galleries: a barn, a school-room, the training-hall of some obsolete princely Guards, once, even, in the well-known small town of Oppenheim, the empty nave of the wonderful old cathedral of St. Catherine.

Someone had given a bale of sacking and some hundred yards of wire and so our galleries looked quite convincing. Still it was not an easy task to reconcile the extremely different pictures. After many experiments we found out that it was no use trying to classify according to '-isms' and suchlike points of view. All we could do was to try not to 'kill' one picture by another, which sounds easy but is not. The result might have been revolting to most of the experts but we had no experts amongst our public. What we did have were people who entered the exhibition asking whether all the pictures were made by hand or if they were copied from patterns. This question was so common that we answered it on the first of our posters at the entrance. We had quite a number of them after a while. The one that aroused most interest indicated how we fixed our prices. All the pictures were for sale and we explained why they had to be more expensive than a colour-print. The artist had to pay so much for the canvas, the stretch-frame, the colours and the frame. He had to work on the painting for approximately so many hours. As he needed a long time for training in his craft he was obviously entitled to get the same wages as a trained house-painter, and he certainly was entitled to the so-called masters' bonus of twenty-five per cent, which as a matter of course is asked if a man who has passed the State examination as a master-craftsman undertakes a job personally. The prices so calculated ranged between one and fifteen pounds and they could be paid in monthly instal-

ments. We sold a surprising lot, not only to the intelligentsia but to farmers, peasants and small shopkeepers and craftsmen, and not only the cheaper pictures.

When the posters were unable to cope with the many questions a few tricks helped. So I had as a rule a big bunch of flowers in an earthen jug on my cashier's desk. Often enough a modern picture would prompt the question: 'What is this?' Then I used to point at my flowers: 'What is this?' The answer was of course: 'A bunch of flowers.' 'Well, and this is a picture.' The dialogue went on with cast-iron certainty. 'But what does the picture mean?' 'It means as much or rather as little as the flower-bunch.' 'But the flower-bunch is natural.' 'No, it is not. Have you ever seen roses and forget-me-nots and lilies-of-the-valley growing in one bunch and out of a jug too?' It was always a success. They stopped trying to understand and, released from that difficult task, started to enjoy. Or if it was the case, they told me frankly that they did not like the particular painting. Usually this release made them judge with a degree of good taste that might have been astonishing to many people. We had, of course, special entrance fees for schools and sometimes a whole class collected the money among themselves to buy a picture for their class-room. Many children, having seen real pictures for the first time in their lives, came later to show me what they had done after the stimulating visit to the exhibition, for even if modern methods were officially introduced in rural schools the practice used to lag behind the theory. The teachers, among them a great many young people, were always very interested, as the career of teaching in country schools usually attracts a rather delightful and intelligent type. There were few exceptions to that rule.

I had a most pleasing time with the Dean of St. Catherine's Cathedral in Oppenheim on the Rhine. The reverend gentleman not only provided board and lodging in the parsonage but introduced me, the rather ignorant but keen pupil, into the mysteries of all the 'sites' of Oppenheim,

meaning the different vineyards. The house was built upon an enormous old wine-vault which made a worthy frame for the spiritual library consisting of bottles from all the sites and nearly all the vintages, some of them real treasures. We tasted a different site every evening and I prolonged the exhibition until we reached the end of the test, finally agreeing that the 1911 Oppenheimer Sackträger was the most praiseworthy beverage. It was rather heavy and perhaps a little bit on the sweetish side, but nevertheless extraordinary full and lovable. I would give much for a bottle of it. The Dean knew all there is to know about viticulture and about the history of vine-growing, and from him I learned, among other useful knowledge, where all the strange names of the sites came from. Our beloved Sackträger for instance owed its name to the strategical importance of that particular site. It used to be the weak point in Oppenheim's defence during the Middle Ages and the guild of sack-porters was in charge of that spot in war-time, the members being of course strong and able-bodied men.

Our general experience, borne out by the sales records as well, was that our public accepted absolutely fantastic and unreal expressionist pictures, rather than the so-called impressionist painting. The notorious argument: 'That is how the painter sees it' did not work, but provoked as a rule an expression on their faces which obviously said: 'Poor chap, why can't he see a tree like ordinary people.' One of the artists, whose picture of a cornflower-coloured dog we sold, told me later that the customer who was a small farmer in a very remote spot had his own mongrel dyed in vivid blue in consequence. I cannot be certain whether the artist's or the farmer's sense of humour was responsible for the story. One of my own paintings was sold because it appealed to a farmer for its unreality and I could not convince the man that in fact it was a rather true copy of a landscape and happenings which were actual, and what is more, were to be found in Germany.



The subject was a gliding-plane, a model for beginners with latticed fuselage, flying over the sand-hills of Rossitten. I can hardly blame the man, for when I saw the original thing for the first time I found it hard to believe myself. Still, he was an incorrigible sceptic anyway. When I somehow mentioned the hot mineral spring in Bad Nauheim, only a few hours by train from his village, he answered with a sly grin: 'Well, I know they make all kinds of things. You must not believe all they tell you.' This happened when we repeated the exhibitions in the following year and I had come down from Berlin to direct them again. The long holiday in the gliders' camp had not only been spent in painting but I went there immediately after closing the first exhibition in order to learn to fly. Apart from my first experiences in the home-made glider I was quite familiar with the theoretical side of gliding, as I had seen the world's first camp for motorless flying being built up in the Rhoen. I felt it was the time to try myself, and so I wrote a letter to the camp director, Rossitten, East Prussia. There was no answer at first and as I had nothing else to do in particular I one day took a train and went to Königsberg. It was my second visit to East Prussia and in the meantime an assembly of wise men had created the Polish Corridor. The train entered foreign soil without any warning and I think I slept through the great event. The landscape was not less flat and boring when I looked out of the window at a small station and I should not have noticed being in Poland had not an official with a gold-laced and square-cornered hat shouted at me in a definitely foreign language. I told him politely I was exceedingly sorry not to understand and quite ready to converse with him in any other language but Polish, and would he mind telling me the time and where I could get some cigarettes. Behind my back there was a hollow groan but the man with the four-cornered cap answered in a very friendly manner in German that there was some by-law forbidding travellers to look out of windows in German trains. Then he told me the time and

offered me a cigarette, adding at the same time that he was sorry I was not allowed to leave the train or to buy anything. In fulfilling the law I closed the window and had to stand quite a good deal of manly abuse from a big fellow who shared the compartment, for speaking politely to a Polish swine. I thought the Pole had been rather human and told my neighbour so, but I only provoked a political lecture, culminating in the prophecy that a certain Herr Hitler would soon come into power and that the first thing he would do would be to get the Corridor back. This was in 1926. Another passenger saved me a useless argument by answering the challenge and preaching the speedy rise of the United Soviet Republics of Europe to put an end to all corridors and other nuisances.

At Königsberg I asked at the inquiry office how to go to my final destination and was told there was no train that day, and so I put up at a cheap rather Eastern-looking hotel. There was a hall attached to it right under my window and I could get no sleep until the early morning hours because a number of speakers were addressing a political meeting there. They spoke in German but the wild community singing the assembly sometimes burst out into was in Polish and the general idea was to unite the whole of East Prussia with Mother Poland. Things went rather too far that night.

The next day I took the train indicated and arrived in a small town where people told me that there was no bus that day for the place where I wanted to go. The mention of a bus roused my suspicion for I knew that no motor-cars were allowed on the Kurische Nehrung at all. I said something to that effect and learned that nobody had ever heard about a flying-school in Rositten. They were right and I put this here for the benefit of Rossitten pilgrims to follow. There are two villages with similar names round Königsberg but in opposite directions from it: Rositten which is a hamlet without any significance, and Rossitten which harbours the

famous camp and the station for the observation of migratory birds.

When I found the right spot the following day, I was told in polite but strictly military terms that the camp-commander had not yet called me up. As there were a few fellows in military trousers and shirt-sleeves hanging round the bureau I thought it might have been a mistake. But no, they were of the Air-Police force, partly on duty and partly for training, and the military spirit was applied to all the inmates alike. So I joined in the fun and asked officially to see the commander. There another manifestation of military behaviour made my waiting to be officially called up superfluous. Someone showed me my bunk and then we all had lunch in a nice large mess-room and I met the others. They were about the nicest crew I ever met in Germany. They came from all parts of the country and from Austria, and here, if ever at all, the uniting spirit of common sport flourished and worked the miracle of making all the differences of political or religious creed and of race and class vanish. After lunch my brother pilots went to the hills in groups and I detailed myself to one. So an hour later I found myself sitting on top of the dunes in a rather primitive looking glider. An instructor asked: 'You know all about it?' I took this to be the official method of teaching how to fly and answered smartly: 'Yessir.' So he shouted a few short commands and the next instant somebody obviously used a gigantic pump to take all my breath away. This was not exactly what I had expected, and I did not like it at all. After a minor eternity I recovered and found myself all alone in mid-air without much appreciation of the lovely view over sand-hills and sea. To judge from the horizon either it or the machine was side-slipping. But did I not know all about it? There could not be any real danger or they would not abandon me to it. So what was the matter? The glider was curving to the right because I had accidentally moved the foot-control that worked the rudder. I put it straight again.

The machine went on hanging to the right. Simple. That is what the joystick is for, at least partly. It worked. I began to enjoy it. And then I remembered that all the others had been told to land near the red flag, but where was the blooming thing? Far to the left, so that means another curve. I managed somehow and then the earth came nearer with terrifying speed. More from fear than from knowledge I pulled the stick a little and sat down nicely not far from the flag. And then a man came running towards me using rather military language and wanted to know why on earth I had flown curves. I told him, standing to attention, and he burst into a fit of laughter. What I had been through turned out to be not quite the official method after all. I had innocently attached myself to the wrong group of advanced students and should have been making nice soft little hops somewhere else, a few inches high and a few yards long. But after all my bones were still unbroken and in the right place. It was left at that and I had a job to live up to the usurped standard. The first flight was officially put into my record and from this I learned that it had been timed as a matter of routine. The venture had lasted about 18 seconds. I can only refer to a similar experience of Mohammed's, who flew through the Seven Heavens and returned before a jug of water which he had knocked down when he started had run out. Unbelievers are invited to repeat the experiment in a glider.

After a week or so I had the pleasure of being honoured for the first time by the 'Cry of the Crane'. This ceremony is reserved for a pilot landing after the passing of a test and on similar occasions, and is performed by the whole crew waving their arms and standing on one leg, producing the hoarse croak of the cranes which are quite frequent in these parts.

For bird-lovers the Kurische Nehrung is a paradise. It forms a small spit of land which in parts can be crossed in a few minutes' walk, and partitions off a gulf of half-sweet water

from the mainland. Its sand-hills run up to about 150 feet high and are in a steady process of wandering to the east. The highest hill, called Predin, has thus gone over a whole village, covering it entirely and now releasing the tops of the chimneys on the western side again. This movement is a danger to the fishing population on the gulf shores, and everything is done to make it stop. The only means is to grow as many trees and as much grass as possible on the sand. Parts of the Nehrung are therefore covered with a real bush on swampy ground which it is strictly forbidden to enter, a felty mass of crippled trees, creepers and moss, out of which sometimes one of the only moose living in Germany lifts its grotesque and impressive head. Sea-birds and waders nest here in millions, and not far from the gliders' camp there is the famous Station for the Observation of Migratory Birds. There is hardly any kind of bird living in Europe which is not found on that small spit of land, and the director of the station told us several stories about tropical birds being found flying with European migratory birds.

Gliding is a most wonderful sport and to my taste it stands the competition with cross-country riding on horseback. Certainly it is more fun than flying a motor-plane, because only in a sailing-plane does the pilot experience the bird-like feeling similar to the centaur-feeling of the horseman. Motorless flying is at least in parts always team-work. The light machines are dragged by hand to the starting-point and in most cases started with a rubber cable by a crew of about ten men. The mutual dependence of the airmen develops of course a spirit of good fellowship which in Rossitten lasted as long as there was actual flying going on. At other times differences were bound to break through. On the flying-grounds hardly any difference was to be found between the men clad mostly in bathing-costumes, because at times a pilot 'watered' instead of landing properly and had to be rescued together with his plane, but round the long tables things looked different. Everybody still wore with exagger-

ated roughness the kind of clothes connected with camp life all over the world, but when it came to drinking one suddenly found out where the students of the duelling corps were sitting. They did not mean any harm in forcing the rest of the pilots to exercise their complicated drinking customs and to live up to their standards. But the others obviously could not avoid a feeling of discomfort, and the commander had to expend considerable energy and tact to do justice to both parties and to keep them quiet. When the weather was against our sport we used to go to the village and hang a big poster outside a pub announcing 'Great Pilots' Ball To-night'. I have never in my life seen so few houses which were not pubs in a single village. And that is what the population looks like. They are without exception of Slavonic origin and their German sounds very foreign. Earning a living by fishing is never an exactly easy task but there it is extremely hard and the people are not very well fitted bodily for their job. During the quiet season they weave wonderful carpets in the technique of Persian rugs and in fanciful gaudy patterns, or construct the strange kind of vanes they use as burgees on their boats. These vanes look rather like South Sea totems and show the outline of the village together with certain symbols in an archaic style. They are painted in black, white and red. Apropos of the Grand Pilots' Ball, there was usually a row with the young men of the village, the weapons on their side being stones and on the side of the pilots pieces of starting-cable, but not much harm was done.

One day I could not help overhearing a conversation between two of my room-mates. They were amongst the oldest in years, both ex-officers and university students. I rather liked them both for being good sports during and off 'duty', as the flying lessons were called, and especially one of them, a queer fish of that rather amiable type so common in Germany, idealistic and romantic to folly. Now these two reminded each other of an incident at their university

town, laughing heartily: an old Jew had been attacked in a dark street, a piece of ham was forced into his mouth and when he spat it out he was beaten for 'spitting before Aryan gentlemen'. I had heard about things like that before, but I had personally never seen or met people capable of such bestialities. The first National Socialists I had met nearly ten years ago, when you hardly ever heard of such outrages. Here they were and lo! they looked like any ordinary person in ordinary life. Their manners were perfect; one could not help but calling them educated; they had proved to be good sports at the flying-fields and at games. I was fool enough to tell them what I thought of their joke, whereas they treated me laughingly as a pitiable mental case. They simply could not see my point. An aristocrat of German blood, they said, an ex-service man and still such a milksop. I told the two fellows rather hot-headedly that if they called such things German I was very proud to have all kinds of blood but German, and got as an answer that one of these days Hitler would certainly teach me my lesson. 'I like you,' said one of them, 'you are a good pilot, and I think you will change your mind in time.' Well, I have not.

There were a lot of red flags in use about the camp, for indicating landing points and giving signals. One day a pilot drew a hammer and sickle upon one of these flags, a very commonplace idea which with him did not mean a thing. There had just been a piece of charcoal handy and that was all. But the commander took a very serious view of the 'incident'. He interrupted the lessons, called all the pilots together round the offending ensign and made a speech. 'I don't mind what you are politically, as long as you fly well. We are all pilots here and nothing else.' There followed the well-known invocation of The Spirit of the Front and the *Volksgemeinschaft*, which included according to the commander 'even Social Democrats'. But he drew the line definitely at Communists. National Socialists he

did not mind; they called themselves a revolutionary party, prepared to overthrow the present state with all means at their disposal. Then he tore the flag to pieces. It was a perfectly good flag and the drawing could easily have been washed out. But his noble rage needed a victim and the offender did not come forward when asked. And mind you, the commander used to say that frontiers between countries were absurd since you were able to fly over them. He was by no means a narrow-minded Nationalist. I suspected him of having been a member of the Youth Movement in his younger days, as he used to play the lute and knew all the songs.

These were the best days of the so-called Weimar Republic. People seemed to have put up with the terrifying amount of freedom they had been presented with almost against their will. There were no spectacular changes; one had ceased to look at old Marshal Hindenburg as a harbinger of a Right-wing revolution. Huge crowds marched behind the red banners on May the First (be it understood, Social Democrats and Communists separate from one another), believing themselves to be the dominating element at least in Berlin. Similar crowds were cheering Briand, Jackie Coogan or the King of Afghanistan. On the occasion of the visit of Amanullah Khan, the German Crown Prince got his part of the cheers as well, when he followed at a distance in an enormous white car the modest Republican pageant in honour of the Oriental ruler. For a while everybody seemed to live in that fool's paradise so well known as the common abode of small Reform Societies, where every dozen new members give all the faithful the feeling that The Cause is making invincibly good progress. Still more petty parties arose, everybody retired to his island with friends and brothers in opinion, and people who wanted to be left alone were more or less left to their private craze. One had got used to the stereotyped abuse in extremist newspapers and nobody took seriously the constant prophecies of the Right and Left that the other



party was just about to overthrow the State by force. Economically there was a boom and the Spirit of Locarno was still the main feature in Germany's political face.

General elections ceased to be exciting and became a dull matter of routine. They were celebrated with great expense of gaudy posters and billions of hand-bills, but the slogans became less and less concrete and lost almost all positive meaning. An election campaign became a kind of dull game which you have to play because everybody does. One of the rules was obviously to call the other party murderers, and so one was inclined to overlook the fact that over three hundred cases of murder had actually been committed at that time. That is not counting the dead of the various civil wars or in street brawls, but plain, individual cases of murder where only one of the parties does the shooting. Cabinet ministers, professors and workmen, all murdered by Right extremists. There was not a single Left murderer, and the constant repetition of the contrary by Herr Hitler cannot change that fact. Herr Hitler's version might become Historical Truth for quite a long time, but that is another thing altogether. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that every person of humanitarian views was never out of danger of being shot. Many cases were never brought to court, and when they were, the sentences were sometimes nothing short of a commendation.

In democratic or otherwise civilized circles these facts were looked upon as regrettable echoes of the wild times of the war, and when they were pointed out as a symptom of a systematic underground war against the Republic, nobody took it too seriously. Everybody was constantly warning against an immediate danger from the other side, and as long as you were at liberty to print and to read it in your paper, the Republic was obviously not yet lost.

If one or other of the murders made a major noise, the parties of the Right hurried to dissociate themselves from the 'horrible deed' and could not find enough noble words to

express their disgust. The National Socialist press especially was always ready to point out that the programme of the party strongly rejected crime as a political weapon. Nobody seemed to remember this part of the programme when, after Herr Hitler came into power, all the more prominent murderers had their memorials unveiled in the presence of high state officials. Except the ones who were still alive and high officials themselves.

The red thread of unscrupulous murder was never really broken even if it sometimes wore thin. And, as with everything in Germany, there was a special philosophy for it, anticipating the later famous classical formulation of the National Socialist law-code: *Recht ist, was dem Deutschen Volke nützt* — Right (and Justice and Law, because the word *Recht* means all this) is that which is useful to the German people. Be it understood that everybody was at liberty to interpret the term German people after his own fashion as well as to have his own conception of usefulness.

In this tendency to have a 'philosophical' excuse at all times we have the greatest of all German dangers. The Germans like to be called A People of Poets and Thinkers, and thinking is indeed a popular sport in that country. (Sometimes in the form of 'thinking with the blood'.) Thinking aims at the acquisition of truth and knowledge. It is not necessary to investigate whether the truth acquired is really the truth, for the psychological effects are the same: strongly to believe oneself in possession of the truth gives a feeling of absolute security and one is inclined to take over any responsibility in the name of such truth. And that is why the amiable type of reformer which was always so widespread in Germany has his dangerous side. They all strongly believed in their truth, on which they had spent a considerable amount of thinking. And the economic law, according to which a thing is the more valuable the less there is of it and the more it is asked for, applies to intellectual capital as well. Therefore the reformer, having

about gliding. As neither of us wanted to be employed as experts on Austria or on gliding, we were both very glad that our respective interviews resulted in our being given a chance on the paper. Monty Jacobs had anyway not much use for the 'sales talk' of applicants, and preferred to find out all about a new man in a conversation which hardly touched on the subject of journalism or on the special intentions of the visitor at all. He was, a fact which at that time you did not take into any special consideration, a Jew. He was a good theatrical critic with an uncommonly sound judgment, and lived up to the traditions of his paper which had had a high reputation for its high standards in Art, Science and *Kultur* ever since the days when Heinrich von Kleist wrote in its columns the best German style ever written.

Harald Landry, then a casual new acquaintance, was not a Jew and he was at that time not an influential man at all. I tell all this in detail because I happened to get this very pleasant position on the *Vossische Zeitung* without being a Jew or having the *Protektion* of a Jew, in fact, without anything which might be called *Protektion*. It is said that this was impossible in 'Jewish Berlin' and on a 'Jewish' paper. As my name did not appear in print from the beginning, and as there was no guarantee that it ever would, even the motive of employing me as a 'shop-window goy' cannot have decided the issue.

I was given books to review and had to write about lectures. You were perfectly at liberty to write from whatever standpoint you liked, the *Voss* was a really democratic paper, and you could take any book or any lecture as an occasion to write an essay about any problem which to you seemed worth while writing about. This system of permanent contributors was not only a benefit for the paper, but a blessing for a class of writers, scientific or otherwise, who could make a very good living while there was plenty of time left to develop their own particular work.

Berlin was full of life in this year of 1926 and in the

following few years before the crisis arose which ended in Herr Hitler's jump into power. We were not content with the general state of affairs in our Republic, but still there was hope that one day sooner or later the German people would learn how to run a democratic state. They were beginning to lose their hysterical attitude towards freedom in private life; they might soon have lost it in public life as well. There were still the notorious cases of corruption: the Berlin mayor bribed with a fur-coat for his wife, and the different scandals in building societies you have heard so much about. The man who bribed the mayor (not the bribed mayor himself who took the coat) was a Jew; the culprits in the biggest building scandal were Protestant parsons. But the 'Jewish' cases had more publicity. Nobody would have thought of pointing out that the latest crook who plundered the pockets of his fellow-citizens, was — of course, we knew it! — a Gentile.

I came to Berlin with all the prejudices of a South German against the Prussian capital. But learning to know Berlin and its people better, one could not help liking both. The sharp and clean Prussian air; the merry tattoo of hurrying feet in the clean streets (the people of Berlin seemed always to be in a hurry); the many *gemütlichen* garden restaurants, *Weinstuben* and cafés; the comfortable new blocks of flats. It was all light and airy and pleasant. And the Berliner are splendid people. They have much in common with the Cockneys; but I believe you have been told that before.

I spoke earlier about the problematic existence of German patriotism; that it could not exist save in the shape of an artificial thing which was meant to be aired on patriotic holidays only. I said before that Germany only existed either as a more or less accidental bunch of countries united by a common aggressive or defensive purpose, or else in the dreams of idealists.

For a long time after the lost war, there was not much fighting spirit left, and no common idea of attack or defence

could herd the *Länder* together and create a Reich idea. In spite of all attempts from Berlin it was impossible to do away with the *Länder*, which had no earthly excuse to exist as semi-independent countries after their rulers had yielded to what little force was needed to remove them. So it was that, the more Spirit of Locarno, the more feeling of security there was, the less the unity and the less the feeling of belonging to one another.

But there was the German Reich as a political reality, a form without content. A nondescript thing which was even unable to decide by what flag it wanted to be represented. You could not love such a thing. So if you were not content to love your Bavarian mountains or your Brandenburg lakes, or if for some reason or other you were not attached to any particular landscape, if you wanted to love Germany the non-existing, you had to create it.

It was said about Berlin in those years that it became more and more the capital of Germany in more than theory. Strange as it may sound, the reason was that Berlin's intellectual life was represented by what was called 'uprooted people'. Only those whose heart was not occupied by a *Land*, a province, a landscape, those who had gone away from their native soil wherever it had been and for whatever reason, were dreaming of GERMANY.

Please don't tell me that there were many people in Berlin who did not care a thing about Germany or anything of the sort, and were quite content to run their business, or to commit their crimes and to have a good time, and did not mind whether the country was Prussia or Germany or France or anything. I know. But they don't matter in the least. As they had no dreams to realize, they did not play any part in the matter we are talking about.

I think it was for the first time in my life that I met, in Berlin, people to whom the name Germany meant something. Nearly all of them would have been offended if you had called them Nationalists, or worse, patriots. These words

smacked too much of flourishes of trumpets on the Kaiser's birthday or the rector's speech in the old school hall.

They were all discontented with things as they were. Criticizing, fighting in newspapers, periodicals and lecture halls, they were often called traitors, sometimes brought to trial and put in jail. Their views differed widely and they were fighting amongst themselves. But whether they would have admitted it or not, they had one aim in common: to create Germany, *the* free humanitarian country. They took all their dreams of humanity, of right, justice, good-will and called them: Germany. Were not men like Goethe, Bach, Kant, Hölderlin, Fichte, born within its frontiers, even if the frontiers had sometimes changed? So Germany had to be the country worthy of these men. It had to be, whether Germans wanted it or not.

Among these Good Germans were many Jews, and for that there is a very good reason. To them, Germany the non-existing was a fact. It was the country which had set their ancestors free or, in the case of the East-Jews, it had always been the promised land of freedom, where you were at liberty to get educated and to work at whatever profession or trade you liked.

If you look from the outside at the many different things which make a country, you are much more likely to see them as a whole. And when you are told that 'a country' has done such and such a thing, you can't help personifying that country and you either love or hate it for what 'it' has done. If the same happens at home, you either praise or curse the Government. Foreigners are bound to have a simpler conception of a country. You may say they are always prejudiced. But when we hate or love, it is always prejudice.

This abstract ideal Germany, for which Jew and Gentile were fighting shoulder to shoulder, never really came to life. It was a very beautiful dream out of which we were awakened one day by the tramp of jack-boots.

Again it was a man from outside, a foreigner, who had had a vision of Germany; and as he did not call the people to live up to the standards of Goethe, Bach and Kant, but used the old well-tested recipe of creating common enemies for them, he succeeded in the realization of his dream.

I now admit that the only way to create a Germany is to make Germany a danger to the rest of the world.

Where are the men who thought themselves Good Germans even if they did not use the word too often, so as not to wear it too thin? A few deserted and went over to the successful enemy. Kurt Tucholsky killed himself when he realized that there was another Germany, a concrete one, which had no use for him and his gallant fight for an ideal Germany. Many have been shot, hanged, beaten to death. The rest are scattered all over the world, and you can hear from their ranks the cry: '*In unserem Lager ist Deutschland*' ('The real Germany is in our camp').

I am sorry, friends, it is not. It has never really been there. There is no reason why we should call the cherished dream in our hearts: Germany. We may call it Western Civilization, or Utopia, or Socialism, or God's Realm on Earth, according to our different tastes and opinions. It may come true in many a country.

It may even come true in that part of Europe which at present is enclosed by the German frontiers. It will not come true in Germany. The Central Power of Europe will always be a centrifugal power as long as it remains a solid block. Herr Hitler hit upon a true symbol when he chose the swastika, the old rune of the whirling movement.

You think the German centrifugal machine could hurl something other than shells at the surrounding world? Then you will have to educate the German people up to the standard of angels, and they won't let you do it. All the great men of the past you like so much to quote, resigned from that task. The more they were related to our ideals, the bitterer the words they found to say how utterly hope-

less their efforts had been. You say they did it only to spur on the people they loved? Perhaps it was so. Did we not feel and act the same way? And ours was a more favourable time than there had ever been. The shock of the Great War, the break-down, left behind a ploughed field, and taught the Germans a lesson not soon to be forgotten.

Not soon means: in fourteen years. While we were living on an island, busy with our responsibility to a Germany which did not exist.

Perhaps one day you or your successors will be given another chance. But before you or they will finish the task in another attempt, another Hitler will unite the people you spur on so lovingly, under another, simpler sign.

For a few years I let myself be carried away by the general current of hope and optimism. Life seemed almost normal in Berlin. If you wanted to, you were able to sit down and work without being continually disturbed. That does not mean that all was quiet on the political front. The intellectual as well as the working class were always in battle against the so-called republican governments, in defence of their republican rights. Every few weeks you read in the papers: 'The police had to open fire on the demonstration . . . 3 dead . . . 10 dead . . . 30 dead . . .' They *had* to open fire! Berlin's chief of police was a Social Democrat, the Prussian Minister of the Interior was a Social Democrat.

But for a few years we did not believe it was a losing battle. The enemy we were up against seemed to us either inhuman or stupid. And if you yourself believe in humanity and reason, you can't doubt the final victory over such opponents. We were rather amused by the minor skirmishes sometimes. One day, a friend of our circle had been sent to attend a lecture and to write about it, by a paper, the name of which I will not mention here, because the poor wretches who were then the editors may have been thrown out by Herr Hitler in the meantime. The paper was Nationalist but ostensibly



Republican and known as rather liberal in cultural matters. The lecture had been about the German-Russian expedition in the Central Asiatic parts of the Soviet Union, and the lecturer referred several times to the newly discovered mountain, which the expedition had named *Pic Lenin*. When our friend came to see the proofs of his article the following day, he read to his great surprise that the mountain was renamed *Pic Nicolaus II* by the editor. He protested against this impossible procedure and pointed out that the mountain in question had not been on any map under the reign of the Czar. It was admitted in the office that this was a real problem. It seemed undesirable to print the name of Lenin in the columns of the paper, but admittedly the mountain could not very well be renamed. A solution was found in a deliberate misprint. Next day you read in print that the expedition had climbed *Pic Henin*.

You can read about the facts of the political development in many excellent books. I have no intention of increasing their number unnecessarily. All I want to say about the internal struggle in these last years of the Republic is that the highest honour is due to the German working class. Under either incapable or corrupt leaders they were fighting heroically and with discipline. Perhaps too much discipline.

How well did Herr Hitler know this German longing for discipline, for uniforms and ranks, this marching four abreast which gives you such a feeling of power. He was the first party-leader to give them what they wanted in full measure. When his storm troopers had already for some time been showing off in brown shirts and marching in military formation, I met the leader of the Communist Party and asked him: 'Why do you not introduce something similar?' His answer was: 'If the Fascists are going to disturb our meetings, we can beat them without uniforms. That is bourgeois tosh.' I pointed out that I had not so much the beating in mind as the propaganda value of these things, at least in Germany, and he said: 'People we can get only

by means of a uniform and a brass band are not worth getting.' But a few years later, not only the Communists, but almost every political party and group had its uniformed militia. You could make a very interesting observation as regards the numerical strength of these uniformed bodies. In turns they were banned by the various governments of the Reich or the *Länder*. Every ban on one of the groups automatically swelled the ranks of the opposing ones. Sometimes you would hear that this was done deliberately. The men were sent to join the enemy's troops in order to undermine their morale and carry the propaganda of their own programme into their ranks. But in many cases it seemed to be the enemy, or rather the enemy's smarter uniform or more flourishing music, which did the undermining.

The outer appearance, the expression of power and glory, became more important than the abstract programme it was originally intended to represent. If the Communists had been converted to the use of uniforms and military play, the National Socialists now turned the tables again and took what had proved to be successful in the opponents' camp. The Communist *Roter Frontkämpfer Bund* introduced a new musical instrument, the so-called *Schalmei*. It was built on the principle of an automobile horn, much cheaper than normal brass instruments, and made a wild, warlike, honking music. The first time that the Berliner heard the name of Horst Wessel, was when he introduced the *Schalmei* band in his Storm Troop. Herr Wessel was a more than doubtful personality in private life, but then his party was not very delicate in the choice of gang leaders. On the contrary, a particular type was rather apt to attract the kind of young rowdy who was needed for the beating up of political enemies. The recruiting district of Herr Wessel's troop was a typical working-class quarter, which proudly called itself Red Wedding. Here Socialist tradition in Berlin had its home. But still, Herr Wessel's *Schalmei*-band was

able to attract a sufficient number of young men to make his troop a real danger to the rest of the population. And he took from his enemies not only the musical instrument. He was the first National Socialist to adopt all the old revolutionary songs, sometimes without changing a single word. The history of many of these songs is interesting and strange. Sometimes you can trace such a song. It might have been a peaceful love-song which was taken up by soldiers who changed the words a little bit. Then, with another few alterations, it became revolutionary, and at last, Herr Hitler's S.A. adopted it. You could never say for sure what kind of marchers would be coming round the corner, as long as you only heard them singing. With very little exaggeration, it can be said that it would even have been difficult to find out who was holding a meeting, as long as you listened only to the slogans, a development which went forward to a grotesque degree towards the end of the Republic.

For the investigation of the real currents in Germany, it became more and more important to take into consideration not so much the enunciated political opinions as the expressions of feelings which sometimes united large groups behind a frontier going diagonally through the political frontiers. The common revelling in uniforms and marching behind the brass band, a certain uniformity in the slang of the opposing troops, the similarity of slogans, were such signs. But there were others.

One new sector in the development of the German mind after the war was clearly marked by an event which most observers will certainly credit to the wrong side: the rising of the Left war-novel.

We used the editors' canteen in the *Ullsteinhaus* as a kind of club, where amongst other papers the *Vossische Zeitung* was at home. Here you got in contact with all the members of the big house, as well as with many guests who had anything to say in Berlin's intellectual life. Often enough, the

more important part of a conference was held there during meal-times.

One day, an acquaintance took me to a single table in a corner, and asked me a confidential question. Would I mind working for another publishing firm, Scherl? The firm was, of course, German National, i.e. Conservative, but could I persuade myself to take on a strictly non-political job there?

I said I did not mind working for them, as long as I had nothing to do with politics and could have enough time for my own work. I did not look upon journalism as my profession anyway. But on the other hand, I should certainly miss the opportunity which the *Voss* gave me of writing about things I thought worth while. So why should I change at all?

He explained the reason for the rather strange offer. Scherl's was publishing a fortnightly, in some respects akin to *Country Life* or *Spur*. Society photographs, fashions, articles on polo and hunting, short stories to match the pictures, and plenty of coloured pages, all on wonderful smooth paper. Now one of the sub-editors had written a novel, and that novel was going to be printed in the *Vossische Zeitung*. The author, as I would appreciate, had no wish to remain in his position after his work came out at Ullstein's, and had resigned his editorship. They were badly in need of a man to replace him immediately.

The whole idea struck me as a joke. To help editing this kind of a periodical was about the last ambition I ever had. But perhaps it would be fun for a while, and I could always leave. So I went to see the man I was perhaps going to replace, and met Herr Erich Maria Remarque.

He seemed to be a pleasant fellow with a weakness for, and ample knowledge of, motor cars, and the most splendid conversationalist I had hitherto met. He had the gift of making a gem out of any old joke or any little scene he was describing, and he knew it. When I asked him about conditions in the office he was about to leave, he declared

that the fact that he had written the novel was the best proof that one was not over-worked there, and the three men who were needed to make up the paper seemed generally to have a good time. I spoke to the other sub-editor and the chief, was introduced to a director or two, and left under the impression that they were all very nice people and that there would not be any harm in thinking the proposition over. The next morning, the office was on the telephone: could I not come over immediately and take my place? Taken by surprise, I went.

Herr Remarque did not dream that he was about to become an outstanding figure in German politics and world literature. How could he? His fellow-editors had for a long time enjoyed his gift of telling the oldest soldiers' stories in a way which made them better than any new ones, and had asked him why on earth he did not make a novel out of all this splendid material. Indeed, why not?

As it came to be written, the book became more than a handful of barrack jokes and war stories. It became the world-famous unprejudiced chronicle of the war, as seen by the private of all armies alike. It was not the book of the professional soldier. Here spoke the conscript, or the war-time volunteer. He gave his version of what the war had been like without any particular bias; he was not a politician. He spoke as we all used to speak about the war: it was a dirty and hateful business, but sometimes we had lots of fun, don't you remember? And what was the good of it all in the end? And do you remember poor X, who was killed on a day when practically nothing was on?

The effect of the book was in many ways miraculous. When the first instalment was printed in the *Voss*, a Dear Old Lady wrote to the editor, and complained about the language the soldiers were using. Could it really be believed that they used words like —? The nice, German soldiers she had seen in the streets and on the stage in the music-halls? And even if they did, was it necessary to print such awful language?

The editor answered in public: the printed version of military language was already a censored one. But if it wanted to get a somewhat clear picture of what soldiers' language had been like, this was about the amount the public had to put up with, and the aim of the book was to give a true account.

One should bear in mind that Letters to the Editor are indeed written in Germany as well as in Britain. But they are not printed; they are answered privately. Ullstein's publicity department broke with tradition in this case and printed all the letters about *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The letters were not limited to the subject of military language. Hundreds, thousands of ex-servicemen wrote to express their appreciation and their gratitude for a book which seemed to them to be a true mirror of their own experiences. It was bound to have that effect because it avoided every extreme, and you found in it all the old jokes as well as all the little scenes which every combatant had witnessed. To judge by the usual standards of literature, this may be a weak point in the book. It does not sound the bugles and drums of heroism, and it has nothing of the deep bitterness of *Death of a Hero*. It is average, and therefore appealed to the average.

The owners of the *Vossische Zeitung*, the brothers Ullstein, were Jews. Therefore, everything published by their firm was called 'Jewish' by the National Socialists and kindred circles, and so for them Herr Remarque was a Jew and his novel a Jewish account of the war. It did not matter that he was able to prove his Aryan blood, as far as there is such a thing. The Nazis saw their chance to start trouble on the biggest scale.

The number of copies sold reached unheard-of figures; soon its sale was second only to that of the Bible.

The astronomical figures were largely due to the unintentional help of the Nationalists. A book which was considered a worthy object of such violent attacks by prudish

spinsters and militarist reactionaries, was bound to endear itself to all liberal-minded people and good Democrats, Pacifists and Republicans. A Popular Front arose to defend it.

In this fight, the Left weapons were letters to the editor; the Rightists did not stop at such tame methods and introduced libel and white mice. You could read of Herr Remarque in the hostile press that he was a Jew, an illegitimate child, an ex-convict, a Frenchman. I can't see what all this could have had to do with his writing ability, but the men who invented all these lies knew their public. It was said that he had never been in the trenches. This also was not true, but if it had been it could only have proved that Herr Remarque was a very great poet. But the most surprising feature in the joust was that the most important, most discussed question was: is Remarque the author's real name? Several square miles of paper have been printed in the discussion of that question. Nobody had the bright idea of looking the solution up in the Prussian State Library, where, as in all such libraries, all pseudonyms are traced.

But did it matter at all? Did not everybody know that to assume a name is quite a common thing for a writer? It should be understood that the question was not whether the 'real name' was possibly a Jewish one, and if you fail to understand what all the row was about, you are in the same boat as myself. Probably it can't be understood unless you 'think with the blood'.

The crest of the wave was reached when the film version came out. The National Socialists sent their followers to the first night armed with boxes full of white mice. The result was pandemonium, and for the following performances the public was subjected to a search at the entrance. Moreover, armed policemen were seated at both ends of each row of seats in the theatre. Soon enough these measures became too expensive and the film was banned. The hooligans had won.

The sales went on increasing, the Popular Front — gathering round a book — grew. The Democrats were in a

cheerful mood. Now you could see where the people stood. The masses and spiritual weapons against a few hooligans and white mice. Truth against lies. A book against violence.

I don't think they were right. They might have been if their front had been able to find some kind of organization. Feeble efforts were made. Defensive measures were taken against the grossest libels. Even a meeting or two was called to discuss the question, since for weeks and months *All Quiet* and its relation to the Popular Front seemed the most important question for the German people. Masses were ready to move, feelings were running high. But the feeble attempts faded again quickly. No serious attempt was made to utilize the movement for the cause of Democracy. It could only have been done by the man who was supposed to be the hero of all this, and Herr Remarque preferred to go on holiday.

He probably knew why. His book was not really a rampart of Democracy, to be defended as the ensign of a Popular Front. And its author was not a political hero. *All Quiet on the Western Front* would have been published by the Conservative publishing firm where Herr Remarque had been an editor but for one reason. It is not that it would have been recognized as subversive pacifist scribbling, but because nobody in Nationalist circles believed that a war novel was good business at the time in Germany. And without the National Socialists and their friends, the book would have remained what the Left claimed it to be: an unprejudiced account of the war. A war novel among war novels. Perhaps a more popular one than the rest, because it was on the level of the masses. Herr Remarque would probably have been happier without his monster success. Without being pledged to be a heroic, political writer, he could have gone on to write ordinary good novels in his excellent style.

I ventured to see quite a different symptom in the general Remarque-enthusiasm, and I still think I was right. The great daily papers usually know their public. The majority



was reading the Democratic press. And if the men responsible for these papers were of the opinion that now was the moment to give their readers something about the war, the fact was not without significance. For the first time since the armistice the papers were all publishing war-novels. The *Vossische Zeitung* was the last to print one.

The first effect I observed when *All Quiet on the Western Front* came out was that the men in our circle began talking about their war experiences. 'Have you read Remarque? You know, where he says . . . wasn't it exactly. . . . were you in Flanders too?' It was amazing in a circle where nobody had ever touched the subject before, unless he was a pacifist and made a speech against war. It was simply not done in pre-Remarque times. To have been in the war was nothing to be proud of for a good Democrat. It was better not to speak about it at all.

But now there was a boom in war literature, and by coincidence, it was almost a Democratic duty to read war novels. They made the subject palatable for peace-loving people. Now you could read all about what a splendid fellow you had been without conscientious scruples; the Democratic or pacifist tendency was certified on the cover.

I tried to make this point of view clear to a friend of mine who was a pacifist. He took it almost as a personal offence until I assured him that I did not doubt the strength of his personal conviction. 'But', I said, 'don't you know your Germans? They don't feel at ease in the Republic, because nowadays they are told that civilized people have to have rational opinions instead of emotions. They expect the educated men who write the papers to do the thinking for them; that is what they pay the penny for. Now you tell them in the majority of the papers that there should be no war on this earth. You succeed to the point of giving them a bad conscience for their normal impulses. But they would be only too happy if you delivered instead a nice excuse for being "simple and straightforward" and punching a fellow's

nose if one doesn't like its shape. Stop your educational attempts, and to-morrow they would not touch the "objective" war novel with a barge pole. To my mind the significance of Remarque's success is that the novel which sells second only to the Bible in Germany is a novel about war.'

The friend said: 'I know you don't believe in Pacifism. But it's you who don't know the Germans.'

I wish he had been right. But most recent events are not calculated to convert me; least of all the latest example (at the time of writing) of the peaceful mind of the German people, the famous cheers after Munich. They were not only, as some intelligent observers explained, an expression of joy and gratitude for getting all they wanted as a free gift. They were more. Again our unfortunate terminology plays a trick. War had not been avoided, but only one side of it: the actual shooting at the enemy's army. It had been not only a victorious war, but The Ideal War, dear to the German mind ever since the Teutonic heroes of old dreamt about the dangerless wars in Valhalla. There had been all the beloved thrill of serious business in the Czechoslovakian war, the stern preparations, the speeches, the tramp of marching infantry, the rattling of tanks in the streets, and then, with the less pleasant parts of the game left out, immediate victory. Valhalla on earth, thank Hitler!

In my new position as an editor of a society magazine I was a rank failure. Not that it mattered very much. The only damage done was that after my resignation I left behind a few dozen photographs which were no use at all to the paper. I had not been able to resist the temptation to trick the chief-editor into buying them. They were beautiful photographs, but 'not the right stuff' and I admit that as a sub-editor you have no right to encourage talented but impecunious photographers. The same happened with a few manuscripts. Once I bought a short story from a man who looked like a pirate

and was wearing a kind of boy-scout hat. The story was very amusing and anything but fit for a magazine which was snobbish on purpose. I don't know how I got the chief-editor to print it. The author's name was Georg Dibbern, and at that time I did not know that one day I should be his boatswain and he my skipper.

Part of my job was occasionally to represent the paper at social gatherings. It was an easy, if sometimes boring, task, as I was not supposed to write anything about these functions, most of them more or less public dances of one or the other genteel society. I went there merely as the Special Envoy of Fashion, our photographer doing the rest without expecting instructions. For a while it was quite amusing to play a new part on still another stage, and sometimes you met queer people. Relics of the old society trying to be 'modern', and people only lately promoted into the new ruling class trying to pass for the old stock. And sometimes you could get political angles which were foreign to a man who was wont to live in literary circles.

Once at a *Herrenessen* I happened to sit beside an elderly gentleman, one of those genial, corpulent fellows with scars, whom you immediately believe to be higher officials in some ministry or other. I was correct in his case, as he was in the Foreign Office. The year, by the way, was 1929. We came to speak about flying and I mentioned Rossitten. 'You are an airman?' My neighbour was interested. 'You should meet my boy. He is in the Air Force, a lieutenant.' I thought that, according to the Versailles Treaty, there was no Air Force in Germany, or at least none you could speak about to a perfect stranger, and said so. After a brief moment of perplexity, he laughed: 'That's a good one. Perhaps you are a Red?'

'That's a good one too,' I said smiling. I have always been of the opinion that nobody could seriously expect the German government to keep to that particular clause of the treaty. And if the government had, I could not imagine any responsible man in the *Reichswehr* who would not have done some-

thing about keeping some sort of Air Force. I think every honest officer will agree with that.

But I got to hear some more about the young man, which was more interesting: 'He is an ardent Nazi, as a matter of course — *ein strammer Nazi, selbstverständlich*. I personally am *Deutschnational* — so far. You can't be anything else in the Foreign Office, at present.'

The year was 1929, Germany a Democratic Republic and the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* the old Conservative, Monarchist Party. It was a matter of course that the young flying officer was a National Socialist, and that his father had to consider the fact that in the Foreign Office you had to pass for a Monarchist—for the time being. The Foreign Minister of that period was Gustaf Stresemann; the Reichskanzler, the Social Democrat Hermann Müller.

I said: 'It would be the duty of a good Democrat to inform the Republican authorities about this state of affairs', and my neighbour wept with laughter. What a wonderful joke!

I did not perform that duty, neither did I write about 'this state of affairs' in any paper. The papers of the Left were anyway alleging every day that the government offices were 'infected with Reactionaries'. And if it could have been proved that this particular official actually was a member of the *Deutschnationale* party — well, why should he not be a member of a legal party? After all, this was a Democratic state.

I wonder to what high office his clever politics have carried him now, or whether his Nazi friends shot him by mistake in some purge as a Reactionary.

After about a year in the editor's office, I felt that the need for some reflection was strongly indicated, preferably from a distance. I resigned and went to work on my own in the neighbourhood of Lugano. That part of the world is supposed to be famous for its sunshine.

I don't believe that there is such a thing as 'bad' weather.

I can enjoy rain and snow and mist as well as sunshine. Yet some kinds of weather are plainly wrong for certain parts.

The population of the Ticino have been successful in persuading themselves and their visitors that theirs is a sunny country. It looks like it, too. So when you get four months of nothing but snow, rain and mist in Lugano you feel cheated.

I did not wait for a further month and went back to Berlin. I had been asked to go as a correspondent on a flight round the world, but the start was postponed from one month to another, and it was doubtful whether it would take place that year at all. While I was waiting, I again ran into Herr Dibbern, the man with the boy-scout hat. He too was about to start on a trip round the world, and his start, too, was delayed. He owned a little, sturdy yacht which had only to be equipped and trimmed to be off, New Zealand bound. All he needed was a little money and a boatswain. I offered to supply both.

The four months in Switzerland had spoiled the optimism of the last four years. They had been an experience rather similar to that of the journey to Holland and the East. Once I left the atmosphere of my Berlin circle, there seemed to be not much foundation for peace of mind and hope left. It was the same in the war: as long as you were in the fighting line, you did not know (and did not too much care to know) how the war as a whole was going. Even if you lost a particular hill or strip of muddy ground, there was always the chance of taking it back to-morrow; and meanwhile the war might have been lost or won.

Seen from Switzerland, the war about the future shape of Germany seemed to be a mock-battle. A fight against shadows while the real enemy was gaining real ground somewhere else. What was the use of fighting that man in the Foreign Office or the abuse of the Republican law against Republicans. The root question was: how were these symptoms possible? Why could such things happen with a

Democratic constitution, a Left majority in parliament and a Social Democrat at the head of the government? It might have been explained simply by corruption. But even so, how was such corruption possible? And I was unable to persuade myself to believe in stark naked treachery, even in cases when there were strong grounds for this suspicion.

Bribery, personal interest and real corruption have always been very rare in Germany. They were not the real danger. They don't fit in with German mentality as a rule. Acts which would be treacherous or corrupt in other parts of the world are usually committed *bona fide* in Germany. In the end they always look like a good deed.

The attitude seems to be traditional. You find it already in the famous *Nibelungenlied*, which is esteemed as the greatest German Saga. It is supposed to be the purest expression of German virtues and sometimes called *Das Hohe Lied der Deutschen Treue* — The Song of Songs of the German Faith and Loyalty. I always wondered why. You know the story? Siegfried, the incarnation of the German Ideal, by a mixture of confidence-trick and violence, steals the *Tarnhelm* which makes you invisible. King Gunther wants to marry the martial maid Brunhild, but is not enough of an athlete and warrior to stand the various tasks which are to be fulfilled by the wooers. So he employs Siegfried, who under the cover of the *Tarnhelm* does the real job while Gunther is only pretending. So the noble king tricks Brunhild into marriage, but on the nuptial night, the bride makes a last stand for her maidenhood, and without outside help Gunther is unable to tame her. She ties him to the bedpost. Fortunately, the *Tarnhelm* has still another virtue. Wearing it, you can adopt any shape you like, and so the following night, Siegfried, in the shape of Gunther, takes the king's place and teaches the maid a lesson. During an accidental quarrel between Mrs. Siegfried and Mrs. Gunther the truth comes out. Gunther and his faithful servant Hagen (always called Faithful Hagen) conspire to remove the inconvenient witness of the

king's deceptions. Pretending that he wants to guard Siegfried, Hagen persuades Siegfried's wife Krimhild to mark with a cross on his coat the secret spot which is the only vulnerable part of his body. Then Gunther invites Siegfried to stay as his guest at a hunt. After the kill, Hagen proposes a running competition, for which they have to lay down their weapons. Siegfried wins and is the first to bow over the well which is the goal and to drink from it. Hagen has arranged to have a spear at hand and stabs him through the cross from behind. Krimhild meditates vengeance, and finally has Gunther, Hagen and their whole crowd slaughtered with the help of a foreign king while they are his guests at a banquet.

You could say that these are old stories from bygone savage ages. But they are not excused as old and savage in Germany. All the heroes are looked at as models, not of criminal conduct, but of faith and knightly virtue. Noble Gunther, Noble Siegfried, Faithful Hagen. *Das Hohe Lied der Deutschen Treue*. I can understand a certain admiration which young toughs give to gangsters on the screen. And there is a kind of wild beauty in these things, especially when you consider they are supposed to have happened a few hundred years ago. But how do the Germans do the trick of looking at these Heroes as the personifications of Faith and Virtue? Again, you have to 'think with the blood' to understand it.

No, I don't believe you can charge with corruption or treason the men who step by step tricked the German Republic into the hands of Herr Hitler. Probably they all acted in good faith. The Socialist Noske who called in the reactionary officers to crush the social revolution, the Social Democrat Party which brought Marshal Hindenburg to the Presidency, the generals who took the oath and the money of the Republic to work against it, the people who tricked Hindenburg with lies into appointing Herr Hitler Chancellor, the old Marshal himself who betrayed the Republic which he was elected to

protect — they all believed in the morality of their actions and had a philosophy ready to defend them. The eagle in the German coat of arms should bear the motto *Bona Fide*.

How can you fight such a spirit? It was always the same tune in different keys: you may break all the rules for a 'higher moral issue'. I know that as long as our world is organized (or, rather, unorganized) as it is, we shall frequently have paradoxical situations arising, where we have to do things which are morally wrong for the sake of a 'higher moral issue'. Politicians have to put up with that fact. But we cannot make the paradoxical case the basis of a philosophy. It would mean the end of philosophy, its surrender.

I did not want to surrender. And I wanted this fact to be respected as my private affair. Obviously I was asking too much in Germany. That is why I ran away and joined the crew of the little yacht, as I had run away from melodrama ten years earlier.

She was a sloop of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  tons, 32 feet long and called *Te Rapunga*, which is Maori for The Longing. I won't write her history, because it has no bearing on the subject of this book, and because Captain Dibbern has the first right to be her chronicler. I hope that one day he will tell the story of how he went to New Zealand and finally won the Anniversary Race to Sydney.

We trimmed the boat at Kiel and tried her on a trip round the Baltic. The next hop was over to Holland and from there across the Channel. In Falmouth I left the *Te Rapunga* after about six months of happy life.

It had indeed been a happy life and I was very sorry to part from Captain Dibbern. He is, in a way, the finest fellow I ever met. But, like the apostle, I did not strive for happiness but for my work. And this I began to realize faintly. It had been privacy I wanted, not a hermitage, and that was what the *Te Rapunga* amounted to. It was another Rhoen. Couldn't I find a place 'in the world' where I was



left alone without becoming a recluse? A telegram reached me in Falmouth offering a position as a newspaper correspondent in Paris. Could I come immediately to Berlin to talk things over?

I was discharged, left by the shortest route, and arrived twenty-four hours too late to get the job.

After life on the sea, and coming from England, I found the atmosphere in Berlin less bearable than ever. The economic depression had chased about 6½ million voters into the camp of the National Socialists, who so far had not been compromised by being in power. One hundred and seven Nazis in the new Reichstag — against twelve in the last one. The 'little man' became revolutionized, and he turned to the party which promised him radical remedies without asking him to profess himself a proletarian. On the contrary, in Herr Hitler's German National Workers Party you could meet with genuine aristocrats up to real Princes of the Blood Royal. The temptations were too strong for the pauperized lower middle classes.

There was a certain increase in the Communist vote, it is true. In fact, that was what everybody was talking about: that the whole question of Germany's future would become a race between the two radical ends of the political scale. If this was true, there could not be much doubt about the winner. The Communists were handicapped by their total lack of understanding of German mentality. It was even heresy to admit that there are such things as different mentalities between different peoples. Only differences in class-mentality were acknowledged. But even if the Germans had never been able to form a real nation, they had certain mental features in common, which you have to understand if you want to influence them. Once in power, the Communists would almost certainly be able to influence and change the German mentality. But they could not get a chance to try. Before they would be able to rally enough Germans around the Red Flag, somebody else would have got the masses in

sufficient number to overthrow the Democratic state. Somebody who employed psychological, German means.

So sooner or later it would be Herr Hitler, if that was really the only alternative open. And he had made clear at the outset what we had to expect from him. It was certainly not his fault if some people did not believe that he would do all the things he promised. I don't mean the points of his programme: Breaking the Servitude of Interest and all the rest. But when the National Socialist faction in the Reichstag put forward a bill For the Protection of the German Race, and everybody laughed at the 'demonstration bill' which would never become law even if the Nazis came into power, I did not laugh. Did nobody in Germany recognize the type in Herr Hitler? The type that 'thinks with the blood' because it cannot stand an argument with people who use their brains for that purpose? Apprehensive of his health, and therefore vegetarian and teetotaler? Constantly shouting and foaming at the mouth to hide his inferiority complex? The querulous person who thinks the whole world is against him and that he alone is right? A man who is convinced, that as he is right and the whole world is wrong, the world has to be saved by his precious, queer theory? Did nobody know him?

It was the same type that had founded the *Siedlungen*, in every characteristic. The man who instinctively knew that he had to appeal to emotions to unite the crowds, because reason does the trick only on a very high level unattainable for him and his followers. When such a prophet realized that he could not convince the hostile profane world, he gathered his people behind the Chinese wall of a self-contained *Siedlung*, where they could be as odd and crazy as he wanted them. But within the *Siedlung*, the programme was fulfilled, even if it meant hard labour from dawn to sunset and the renunciation of every comfort of modern civilization.

When I looked at Herr Hitler's portrait, I knew what Germany would look like once he came into power. It

would be the biggest *Siedlung* the world had ever seen, ardent, zealous to convert the surrounding world; it would be shut off from the world and would open its frontiers only to swallow the surrounding parts bit by bit.

There seemed to be no escape from such a future, and if a miracle could have been worked to prevent it, I did not know how to work it. But where was I to go? Two questions had to be considered: in what country were you allowed to think what you liked and left alone as long as you did not interfere with other people's rights? And where could you earn a modest living as a foreigner?

## CHAPTER XVIII

Volvedme al otro lado  
De esta ya soy tostado

*Spanish Proverb*

I FOUND by sheer accident a country to fulfil both conditions. I got a cable which ran: CAN YOU COME IMMEDIATELY IBIZA BALEARES STOP CABLE REPLY FONDA MARINA STOP.

This seemed to be true adventure and romance. I was positive I had never met a lady of the name of Fonda Marina, but it was a beautiful name, I thought. To make sure about the Baleares, I had a look at the atlas. Right, they were some little islands in the Mediterranean. Doña Fonda was probably a Spaniard, though she cabled in German. She seemed to be in some trouble or other, which was quite obvious as there was a revolution on in Spain. Only the other day I had read the names of the new Republican cabinet to replace the government of Admiral Aznar. There were many names on the list which you used to see only on the cover of a book, which seemed to be a good sign of the standards of civilization of the new Republic.

Surprisingly enough, there was not much talk about that Spanish revolution in Germany. That is, surprising for anybody who still believed that Germany was a Republic inhabited by Republicans. Nobody rejoiced over the fact that the Democratic cause had won a victory over a weak egotistic king and a semi-fascist dictator. It was still another of these disturbing symptoms, this total absence of interest. I packed a case, cabled to Fonda Marina and set out for Spain. The *Vossische Zeitung* had furnished me with a polite letter in Spanish, asking all authorities to give me all necessary help. Only the editor was in doubt whether there would be any authorities. In that case I had the address of our sports

correspondent in Barcelona, the only representative of the Ullstein firm in Catalonia.

Three episodes concerned with railway officials impress the journey on my memory. In Frankfort on the Main I had to change trains, and wanted to know if there was enough time to go to the bookstall outside. A big man in railway uniform was promenading on the platform. In Germany, it is regarded as impolite not to address a man by his title, and so I said to him: 'Excuse me, Herr *Zugführer* . . .' The word means 'chief guard', and that was what he seemed to be. He interrupted my question before I could proceed. 'I'm not a *Zugführer*! Don't you know the badges of rank?' With as stern and polite a face as I could manage, I asked his forgiveness for the mistake, and put my question. The answer was: 'I'm not an inquiry officer.' 'Then can you please tell me where to find one?' 'I have no time for that.' And he went on promenading along the platform.

In France, I fell asleep in the train, and when I woke up and looked out of the window I found wonderful blue sea on my right. There must be some mistake. If there was to be any sea at all, it had to be on my left. I stepped out at the next town and learned that I was almost in Toulon and should have changed hours ago in Marseilles. 'If you run, you can get a train back there.' I got it, and went to see the station-master in Marseilles. It was the first time that I had taken a wrong train in France and I did not know where and how to pay for the detour. But the station-master did not appear to understand what I wanted from him. Perhaps my French was too bad after all. But then he got the idea, and laughed: 'I see — you have lost your time, and you want to pay me money for that?'

In Spain the chief guard of the train (if he was not a chief guard, he did not say so) gave me my first lesson in Spanish and later insisted on giving me lunch as well.

And there are people who don't believe in different mentalities in different countries.

Doña Fonda was a great disappointment. The word means 'inn'. But the Marina Inn was as Spanish and as lovely as I could wish for, and the explanation was that my sister was staying there. The signature of the cable had been lost in the Revolution. Softly rocking in the harbour was the good old *Te Rapunga*.

My sister had made the journey on board the yacht as far as Ibiza, and was just about to leave her. The *Te Rapunga* was now off on the long voyage over the Atlantic, and Captain Dibbern did not want to take responsibility for a lady on that part of his trip. So we had a farewell party. A few months later, the boat was still in Gibraltar, my sister joined the crew again, and worked her passage over the ocean like any male sailor, but we did not have any foreboding of that during the few weeks after the *Te Rapunga* had left the island.

There was as good as no notion of the big political change on Ibiza, as far as a stranger could see. But in Barcelona I had seen what that Revolution meant. The main part was over already, there was almost no more shooting from Fascist *pistoleros*, but there were the victorious crowds in the streets. I have never seen anything like it.

Twice I have seen the German people in what was supposed to be a victorious revolution. The first time, after the war, when those poor, haggard wretches pretended to be rejoicing over the break-down called Revolution. And then the enthusiastic crowds greeting Hitler's victory, the glitter of a morbid ecstasy in their eyes, women shrieking in hysterics, men marching four, eight abreast with set jaws, the rhythmical cries '*Führer, Führer . . .*'

The Spaniards were happy. No wanton victors. No hysterics. No trace of the heavy fight they had been through. No cries of vengeance against the defeated enemy. They danced along the streets instead of marching. They laughed and waved the new flags of republican Catalonia, republican Spain. They did not expect the earthly paradise to break

year. The forces remaining on the battlefield and fighting over the corpse of the German Republic became more visible in their outlines. Three groups were still in the game, and we will distinguish them by the differences in the tactics they employed. Their final aim was in each case to establish a totally different kind of state in place of the Democratic Republic. They were: the Old Ruling Class, the Communists, and the National Socialists.

A general enlightened me about the tactics of the first group in a private conversation. 'It is no use trying to get masses by persuading them. You have to command them. And to be able to do that, you must have your hands at the trigger and at the bread-basket. That is the only effective form of politics: since you need masses to run the State, you have to have control of the guns and the bread. That is, you have to occupy every single position that gives you more power over both.'

They were well on the way to achieving that aim. Already the most important position had been taken, the government of the Reich. Herr von Papen, General von Schleicher, Freiherr von Neurath and the rest of the Baronial Cabinet, together with their military and land-owning friends, were quite a good and representative garrison for the fortress. Everywhere, the Old Ruling Class tried successfully to occupy single positions of power by the traditional means of diplomacy, personal intrigue and money. It was no wonder you had to be *Deutschnational* if you wanted to get on in the Republican Foreign Office. When they finally lost their game and had to leave the shaping of the new State to Herr Hitler, I heard the sad remark from a German National politician: 'We should never have bothered about getting the masses, or thought we could do it by enlisting the Drummer.' The Drummer was Herr Hitler. His own party friends used to call him so at the beginning. A National Socialist cigarette factory even named their product 'Drummer'. Later the name was banned by the party.

It was not desirable to remind people that Herr Hitler had not always been The Leader, but only the man who was to play the big drum at the entrance of the fair booth.

The Communists were fighting to get the confidence of the masses. Their attempts to occupy single positions had proved unsuccessful. Whenever they had succeeded in the conquest of a single position as in Saxony and Thuringia, there had always been someone who had his hand ready on the gun. The same had happened at the end of the various insurrections. And apart from the technical impossibility of joining in the game of personal intrigues, the Marxist theory again proved a handicap in political



out, given to them by the mystical Leader; they were glad that an obstacle had been removed by their own hands, an obstacle before the paradise they were now going to build up with their own hands.

To see them was to believe in their faith: that there was a better future for mankind on this earth.

To-day, while I am writing this sentence, the last remnant of the Catalan Army is crossing the frontier into France. Italian, German, Moorish soldiers are rejoicing in Barcelona's streets. There are Spaniards and Catalans too who rejoice, celebrating their and their foreign accomplices' victory over their own people. And this time, Germany is not indifferent. The German Republic did not greet the new-born Democracy. Herr Hitler's Germany celebrates the victory of General Franco over the Spanish people: a new member is about to join the Fascist plot.

I went back to Berlin only to settle my affairs and to return to Ibiza as quickly as possible. The island at that time, a paradise, had not yet been found out by the tourists. We were only about five or six foreigners there, quiet people of different nations. I did not even meet all of them. One of those I saw frequently was a German crook, a 'confidence-man', wanted by the police in at least two different countries. But we did not know that at the time and liked him very much.

In one of the fishing villages I had a rather instructive object-lesson in economics. The men used to go fishing in their sailing boats before dawn and return when the boat was full. It took them all about the same time to get the work finished, and then they started for the race back. For a race it was. On the quay the trader was waiting for the catch. The first lot he had to buy without bargaining; how could he know what was to follow in the other boats? The first man got the best price and sold all his fish. The second man's chance was less certain, and the last to arrive had

sometimes to throw his fish back into the sea. The trader might already have enough fish for the day.

The race was won by seamanship and skill. But one day, a clever man put an end to all that. He bought a motor and became not only quicker but independent of the wind the others had to wait for. So he won the race every day, and the motor paid him well. But only until all the rest of the fishermen had purchased motors too. Now the chances in the race were about equal again, but the expenses were higher. But the trader paid no more for the fish.

After a few happy months, I went to Berlin to settle a few private matters, and expected to be back soon.

It was in the autumn of 1931. A friend of mine, a singer, had arranged for a concert to be given in a beautiful old town which I did not know, and asked me to attend. After the concert we had a little party, and I happened to sit beside a *Reichswehr* captain. He was the good, average type of army officer, sufficiently interested in his job but sufficiently broad-minded to be interested in music and art as well and a bit self-conscious about these civilian inclinations. He offered me a match from a box, the tin-cover of which was adorned with the black swastika in the white circle on a red field, at that time the private crest of the National Socialist Party. Politics were banned in the *Reichswehr*. I asked: 'Are there many of these boxes in your Regiment?'

'Plenty,' he said, 'this one is a gift from my sergeant-major. All the N.C.O.'s have them as a matter of course.'

You got used to such matters of course in the Democratic Republic. In Berlin, a friend tried to persuade me into a more hopeful outlook. He assured me that there was no danger from the Nazis. If the Democrats were too weak to defend themselves, the *Reichswehr* would take over and protect the State from the Fascists. And he was a journalist.

In a way the situation became clearer in the following

year. The forces remaining on the battlefield and fighting over the corpse of the German Republic became more visible in their outlines. Three groups were still in the game, and we will distinguish them by the differences in the tactics they employed. Their final aim was in each case to establish a totally different kind of state in place of the Democratic Republic. They were: the Old Ruling Class, the Communists, and the National Socialists.

A general enlightened me about the tactics of the first group in a private conversation. 'It is no use trying to get masses by persuading them. You have to command them. And to be able to do that, you must have your hands at the trigger and at the bread-basket. That is the only effective form of politics: since you need masses to run the State, you have to have control of the guns and the bread. That is, you have to occupy every single position that gives you more power over both.'

They were well on the way to achieving that aim. Already the most important position had been taken, the government of the Reich. Herr von Papen, General von Schleicher, Freiherr von Neurath and the rest of the Baronial Cabinet, together with their military and land-owning friends, were quite a good and representative garrison for the fortress. Everywhere, the Old Ruling Class tried successfully to occupy single positions of power by the traditional means of diplomacy, personal intrigue and money. It was no wonder you had to be *Deutschnational* if you wanted to get on in the Republican Foreign Office. When they finally lost their game and had to leave the shaping of the new State to Herr Hitler, I heard the sad remark from a German National politician: 'We should never have bothered about getting the masses, or thought we could do it by enlisting the Drummer.' The Drummer was Herr Hitler. His own party friends used to call him so at the beginning. A National Socialist cigarette factory even named their product 'Drummer'. Later the name was banned by the party.

It was not desirable to remind people that Herr Hitler had not always been The Leader, but only the man who was to play the big drum at the entrance of the fair booth.

The Communists were fighting to get the confidence of the masses. Their attempts to occupy single positions had proved unsuccessful. Whenever they had succeeded in the conquest of a single position as in Saxony and Thuringia, there had always been someone who had his hand ready on the gun. The same had happened at the end of the various insurrections. And apart from the technical impossibility of joining in the game of personal intrigues, the Marxist theory again proved a handicap in political diplomacy. If you believe yourself to be in possession of the Absolute Truth, Scientific Marxism, you are hardly inclined to compromise and to make use of allies without at first converting them to your doctrine. The Communists' idea of a united front was always to make it a united front of Communists from the beginning. So for them it was only a matter of getting the masses into the Party. Now obviously a party can gain followers only at the cost of another party. (The so-called unorganized masses don't come in here. They are always in the orbit of some party or other and can be credited to that party.) So you have first of all to study the mentality that has been driving these masses into the neighbouring camp, and adapt your propaganda to that mentality. The Communists started to bother about it too late, and when they did, they went to the wrong address. I attended a mass-meeting in Berlin's biggest hall, the *Sportpalast*, during the election campaign for the last Reichstag before Herr Hitler made voting a farce. Obviously the Communists had learned something. Flags, bands, uniforms and rhythmical shouts were no longer regarded as bourgeois tosh. The outward appearance of the meeting was not very different from a Nazi meeting. Herr Thälmann was referred to as Leader, and you could hear the word National about as often as from any Nationalist platform. Besides,

the Communist Leader spoke for over three hours and even the fiercest followers could not stand so much theory, and fell asleep. They missed a lecture on a plan to Free Germany from the Chains of Versailles. I was under the impression that I had been told about such a plan from another platform previously. It hardly matters which one was the better plan. If there was someone amongst the assembly who had come to be helped to make up his mind whether to vote National Socialist or Communist, he probably went away convinced that the Nazis sold the real article and that here he was offered an imitation. When it all was over, I went into the street, and, standing at the gates, looked at the faces of the people coming out. Suddenly a shot was fired from a house opposite. Police were training their search-lights on the windows and the roof. Nobody seemed to be hit and nobody paid much attention. The faces were tired, there was not much enthusiasm left. It might have been the long sitting, the dull, endless speech. But I think there was anyway not much aggressive enthusiasm left in the Communist ranks. Determination to resist, yes. But not the ardour of the winning battle.

A man ran into me, a small shopkeeper from my neighbourhood. I asked: 'Have you been inside? I thought you were a Social Democrat.' He sneered, 'I have been. But if Severing and Braun let themselves get arrested without a fight . . .' He was referring to July 20th, when the Nationalist government of the Reich dismissed these Social Democrat Prussian ministers. It was an open breach of the constitution, and the ministers had not even been arrested. They had gone home under protest. Just another 'single position occupied'.

The ex-Socialist concluded: 'It's the Nazis or the Communists now. And if you ask me, the Communists won't do it.' Exactly what I expected him to say.

If the Old Ruling Class tried to occupy key positions and the Communists tried to get the masses, the National

Socialists applied both these methods. They had always been active in the gambling and bargaining for Ministries, it was easy for them never to lose touch with the Right, being a National party, and at the same time to carry their propaganda among the lower-middle and working class, by calling themselves Socialist. Their mass-propaganda spoke the language of every single class and the dialect of every part of the country. They had speakers in evening-dress and speakers in overalls. And they promised a remedy against every complaint, a thing that they alone were able to do without danger because of their chief trick: the creation of a fictitious common enemy, the Jew.

They could not promise the factory-owner help against the demand of his workers and the working man help against the capitalist at the same time. So they promised both of them help against the Jews. They told the workman that it was not the capitalist he was up against — it was the Jew. And the capitalist was told that the demand for decent wages and decent working conditions was nothing but the work of agitators — the Jews. So when one side asked unpleasant questions about promises of help made to the party opposite, the answer was always: We never promised them help against *you*, our struggle is against the Jews. So the Nazis were able to fight on both sides of the barricades in class-warfare. It was a handy policy.

Another trick to avoid unpleasant questions and to be able to unite the most contrary interests was the identification of the *Führer* with the theory and the programme of the Party. You can argue against a fixed theory and point out its illogical spots. But can you argue against the theory that a certain man will work a miracle, if you only let him? The Germans were anyhow tired of the anonymous system of voting for party lists, and glad to be asked to vote for a living person they could see and hear. There had been much too much rational theory in the Republic for their liking. Germans are not rational, yet they like to brood over

things and therefore call themselves A People of Thinkers. Hitlerism gave them just the right amount of profound and theoretical-sounding phrases, and no rational, intellectual effort was required. You could understand 'with the blood'.

So if you looked at the three competing groups from the point of view of the tactics applied, the situation was like this:

The Communists were not in the game for key positions. They were not likely to get the necessary masses quickly enough to beat the National Socialist competition.

The Old Ruling Class were in the process of obtaining key positions. They would have to dispose of hostile masses which were becoming more and more radical and difficult to handle.

The National Socialists were successful competitors in the game for key positions and had excellent tactics for drawing of masses from almost every camp.

The rest of the parties were not active in the political game at all. If there was any need to prove this fact, the proof could be found in a melancholy sight I observed in the streets of Berlin during the election campaign. At least five times I found a poster showing a woman and children. In each case they were painted by a different artist, but somehow it seemed always to be the same family. The slogan printed underneath was always the same: 'Think of your children, vote for . . .' — five different parties, supposed to oppose each other. If there were any other posters of the moderate parties, they only assured the voter that the editors were against Nazi rule — and that in a state where everybody is convinced that someone simply has to find some concrete proposal to end the parliamentary deadlock!

The deadlock was not ended by this last free election. The National Socialists lost about two million votes, and among my friends this was regarded as very important. I was not convinced that it was likely to change the chances

of the three groups. As it was again impossible to form a majority in the Reichstag, a change by *coup d'état* or open violence seemed unavoidable. The Communists, should they ever try, would find themselves against a united front of Old Ruling Class and National Socialists, possibly also the Social Democrats who might however stand by in benevolent neutrality. A *coup d'état* of the Old Ruling Class would have to let the National Socialists into the business and there was hardly any doubt that Herr Hitler would sell his help only at the highest price. The blockhead type of German Reformer who believed himself in the possession of Absolute Truth was not likely to get away from his principle of All or Nothing. Sooner or later, he would get it.

There was only one reason why I remained in Germany. I wanted to marry before going out again. The event took place in December. After Christmas we would go to Spain.

I had contemplated going to England instead; there were some good reasons for that. Though I liked Spain and the Spaniards very much, I knew that I would always be a foreigner there, which, in certain ways, meant being a recluse again. In England it would be different; so much I had been able to find out in the first week or so of my first stay in this country. That had not been an altogether unexpected experience. But the only way to live in England seemed to me to go there as a newspaper correspondent. What else could I live on? In Spain it was much easier to manage. As long as I was able to write something in a German paper from time to time, the low cost of living and the high value of the Reichsmark would keep me alive. But now I knew for certain that sooner or later the German press would look exactly as Herr Hitler had promised he would make it look. So there was not much hope of sending articles from Spain, but certainly no hope whatever of being sent to England by a German paper.

Towards the end of January, I was still in Berlin, and getting uneasy about the delay. My wife fell ill and had to go



to a nursing home. I had just come away from a visit to her, when I was swept off by a raving mad crowd into the Wilhelmstrasse. Herr Hitler, the newly appointed Reichskanzler, was reviewing the parade of his people at a window there.

## CHAPTER XIX

At that moment I knew that the Communist Party was the culprit: I only wish that the rest of the world had seen this as clearly.

### HERMANN GOERING *at the Reichstag Trial*

'ARE you going to emigrate?' Every time I met a friend in those days the question was put. I used to answer that I had already emigrated two or three years ago, and was only in Germany on a visit. There was no sense in staying and in waiting and seeing what they would do to you and me and the whole of the Reich. Still, when my wife came out of the nursing home, unexpected financial difficulties delayed our departure again. We had already given up the flat and were staying in a small furnished room.

The Communists tried to answer the appointment of Herr Hitler with a general strike, and the Social Democrats were riding in motor vans through the streets, throwing hand-bills amongst the passers-by, on which they stated that they would have nothing whatever to do with such violent measures. Some of my friends had overcome the first shock already, and were foretelling that, once in power, Herr Hitler would have to yield to reality. As though any reforming German Idealist had ever yielded to reality! Some were placing hope on the fact that the new cabinet was in theory a mixture of National Socialists and Old Ruling Class. Perhaps it might not be necessary to emigrate, after all.

Business went on as badly as usual. A friend of mine, a press photographer, asked me to accompany him on a job at a great variety theatre. He had to 'shoot' the Weintraub Band which was going to the U.S.A. in a few days' time. I had known Herr Weintraub from the time

when he had been working with Frederic Hollaender in the latter's charming little satirical shows.

I had to wait for the photographer outside the theatre. He did not turn up, and I entered into conversation with the lady-cashier in her box. The policeman on duty joined us, and later an elderly bourgeois gentleman who seemed to be waiting for somebody. My friend was very late and I was about to go home, when he suddenly joined our group. I said: 'We'll have missed the Weintraubs.'

'Never mind them now,' said he. 'The Reichstag is burning.'

'*Donnerwetter!*' said the elderly bourgeois gentleman. 'I should never have thought the Nazis had the pluck.'

The policeman said: 'Well, it doesn't seem quite the right thing to do, but after all, they are on the job, and they can certainly do without the "talking-shop". They have always said that they are against it.'

The lady-cashier had that already familiar stare in her eyes: 'Well, they *are* going to clean up the mess.'

My friend said the Reichstag was an ugly building, but nevertheless it was a shame to burn it. Hitler would be losing many friends as a result.

There seemed a good many different angles from which to view the fact, but there was only one opinion on the question of authorship. I tried, without much conviction, to venture the remark that it might quite as well have been an accident. They all laughed: 'Nice accident, the very moment the bitter enemies of parliament come into power.'

Well, the remark was convincing. And it was exactly in the Nazi style. They always had a weakness for flaming symbols, so why should they not give the symbol reality?

It was not too late for our job, and we took our photographs after the performance. It was very late when I went home. I made a detour to see the fire, but there was only a faint glow in the cupola and a lot of Nazi uniforms all over the place. They did not seem to be rejoicing, and a police

cordon kept onlookers away. Near the Brandenburger Tor I found a newspaper boy selling the German National *Lokalanzeiger*. It already had the whole story: about the Dutch Communist, van der Lubbe, the truckloads of incendiary stuff that the police had taken out of the building, the threat of vengeance against the Communists and Social Democrats. You probably know all this.

Only about an hour before I got home the S.A. raided the house, looking for Erich Weinert, the Communist poet, who had his flat above our room. Fortunately he was not at home.

If there had been some justification for the optimistic belief that the Third Reich had not yet begun as long as there were German National ministers in Herr Hitler's cabinet, this belief became plain folly after the Reichstag fire.

The National Socialist Party was by no means strong enough to form anything like a parliamentary government. Even together with the German Nationals they would not have had the necessary majority to introduce even the most modest part of their programme by constitutional means. Still, Herr Hitler went on giving assurances that he would stick to legal means, and one could only wonder how the trick would be done: even if one grew gradually accustomed to hearing many things called legal which to a simple mind seemed to be plain violence. The burning of the Reichstag solved the riddle easily. It not only provided a quite plausible reason for the banning of the Communist Party and the arrest of such Social Democrats as might become dangerous to the new regime, but also it scared Herr Hitler's bourgeois supporters into a panic. Without that panic it might have proved difficult to persuade the German National members of the cabinet to give Herr Hitler the actual lead. Furthermore, the assertion that the danger of a Communist uprising called for strong measures, gave the excuse for arming the S.A., and for all the acts of organized

terror which made the election of the new Reichstag a farce.

It is one of History's ironical jokes that the Old Ruling Class missed their last chance in Germany by falling for that very Bolshevik-Danger stunt they cherished so much themselves. They had been repeating that fairy-tale so often that now they could not help falling for it when Herr Hitler let the bogymen out of the box. The Drummer changed into the Piper who had to be paid.

The arrests went on day after day. Nobody will ever know the true number of the men and women taken away from their homes never to be seen again. A friend of mine, a doctor, gave me my first idea of what was happening to the arrested people. He had always been to a certain extent sympathetic to the Nazis, as he used to be a member of the Youth Movement, and the likeness between Herr Hitler's phrases about Higher Breeding and *Volksgemeinschaft* and similar ideas in the Wandervogel appealed to him, as well as the use of 'Heil!' and the swastika. He had seen active service as an infantry volunteer and later as an army surgeon. His lodgings were near the former barracks of a regiment of the Guards in which were now housed some public offices, and he had frequently to visit the huge network of buildings in some official capacity. One day during Germany's Awakening he happened to go over to a wing at the far end in search of one of the offices, and there, behind the window of a cellar, he saw a face.

When I saw him a few days later, his hands were trembling, and only with the greatest effort was he able to tell me his experience. 'It was not really a face, it was a lump of blood and raw flesh. There was a black hole in it, the mouth. The face was roaring without a voice.'

He looked through the window. The cellar was filled with people in a similar state. An S.A. man came round the corner and chased him away with his gun.

The S.A. men had been waiting for what they used to call

The Night of the Long Knives, and were disappointed when Herr Hitler did not give them an absolutely free hand but insisted on certain restrictions. The restrictions did not make much practical difference, but they had to be observed: for every act of violence there had to be an excuse, preferably a legal-looking excuse. Herr Hitler had promised to maintain law and order. The Reds were declared fair game because they were alleged to have burnt the Reichstag and to be in armed uprising against the legal authority. Who was able to prove this statement a lie, a statement made by men using the venerable titles of Chancellor and Minister of the Reich?

In the cases of men who were likely to cause trouble to the new rulers, but were not members of the 'illegal' Communist Party, other excuses had to be found.

I knew a teacher, living in our neighbourhood, who was well-known for his writings about school-reform and for his Democratic opinions. He would always have objected strongly to being called a Red. Once during these days, when he came home from school, he found his door unlocked, and his little daughter told him that 'soldiers' had been looking for him. They had been waiting in the library and would come back soon. The 'soldiers' had been S.A. men and they had not lost their time merely waiting in the library. They came back and found bundles of 'illegal' pamphlets and banned literature behind the shelves, evidence enough to justify the arrest of the teacher. What use was it for the man to declare that he knew nothing about the 'evidence'? It was enough for the arrest to take on a legal aspect. Herr Hitler maintained law and order.

I think all this is an interesting feature in the National Socialist policy by reason of its very inconsistency. Obviously Herr Hitler did not think the time ripe for openly declaring that 'Law and Justice are that which is useful to the German people', i.e. what the *Führer* thinks useful is right. It seems that for quite a long time he did not succeed in getting rid of

what remained of his conscience, in spite of all the emphasizing of The *Führer's* Will as Supreme Law and the Right of the *Herrenmensch*. After the shooting of Captain Röhm and over a thousand other men, Herr Hitler's will seemed not to be supreme enough a law, and he hurried to get himself cleansed by a retro-active law issued by the rest of his cabinet ministers.

.. Herr Hitler's ideal is the powerful, violent German *Übermensch*, and he himself is a weak, neurotic type. So what can he do? He gives the same kind of admiration to the Blonde Beast as the little boy in the cinema to the gangster hero. Here he has the recipe for reconciling weakness and ambition. If a weak man takes to violence against a much stronger enemy, it has to be the most unscrupulous and brutal violence. If he has no chance in a fair fight, he can always succeed by breaking the rules.

But, unfortunately, the joy of discovering the recipe is somewhat darkened by the fact that Herr Hitler is not really a gangster. He can't help being a little bourgeois with moral scruples. So he has to employ lies and subterfuges to salve his conscience after each act of violence and injustice.

Then, one day, he has usurped enough power by such means. Now he has his chance in a fair fight. But the power is only stolen, just as Siegfried stole the *Tarnhelm* and Gunther cheated his way into Brunhild's bed. Can a crook retire on the earnings of the last big bank-robbery and become a respectable citizen? The only way to keep power and to keep one's conscience quiet is to proclaim new 'higher' morals: God and Justice have commanded him to do everything to secure domination over the world for the German people.

In spite of the terror, the arrests, the fear of the Bolshevik Danger and the elimination of the Communist Party from the Reichstag, the newly elected parliament contained only forty-four per cent of National Socialist deputies. Even together with the German Nationals, Herr Hitler's cabinet was

unable to establish the two-thirds majority necessary to make changes in the constitution. And he was determined to bring about the destruction of the constitution by apparently constitutional means only.

When the Reichstag was asked to support a Bill giving Herr Hitler's cabinet power to rule without parliament for four years, the Social Democrats could not very well help voting against it. They were not left in any doubt about the fact that Herr Hitler was determined not to let them have any say in his Third Reich, whichever way they chose to vote. So they made a last, pathetic demonstration and left the political stage. The decision rested with the Catholic *Zentrumspartei*.

Herr Hitler was a Catholic himself, though at that time he was excommunicated. The term is often misinterpreted by non-Catholics. It does not mean that a person is excluded from the Church as such. It is just that the Sacraments are refused him temporarily. He remains, nevertheless, a son of the Mother Church. Theoretically there was still some hope that the heretic Hitler would change his mind about certain points in his political programme. Had he not repeatedly declared himself a 'Positive Christian'? The term was used in the Party Programme as well. If a sinner may desert the Church, the Church cannot desert the sinner. The *Zentrumspartei* was expected by many Republicans to vote against the Bill, but this vain hope arose from the widespread misinterpretation. The mother could not be hostile to her erring son, she had to take any opportunity to keep what remained of her influence. Perhaps a loyal *Zentrumspartei* was able to secure that influence. The Catholics voted in favour of the Bill.

Theoretically, their speculation was wrong. The runaways who founded *Siedlungen* for the sake of their private higher morals had no use for the influence of mothers. Herr Hitler's role as Positive Christian was only one of his inconsistencies arising from his petty bourgeois origin. His claim on the



body and soul of every citizen was a totalitarian one. The supreme, nay, the sole, source of The Truth was the *Führer*. How could he tolerate any other spiritual authority besides himself? As the supreme legislator in worldly and spiritual matters, he held the position of a god. But he was bound to shrink from that thought, having been brought up in the Catholic faith. In order not to lose the crutch his conscience needed, he invented the formula that God was using him as a tool to fulfil His will: the domination of the German Blood over the world. His followers, more logical than their master, were of the opinion that it could not very well be the Christian God whose will consisted of such a programme, and hence the German Pagans. The majority, however, who did not want to take that bold logical step, invented the absurd conception of a German Christianity, a mixture of Christian phraseology and Herr Hitler's idea of a German God.

It was not only the parliamentary *Zentrumspartei* that believed in the possibility of maintaining some kind of normal government. In the rush of events it was difficult to realize the true significance of the change. There were still German National Cabinet Ministers. Acts of violence, however shocking, were excused by laws. There had been elections and the Reichstag had been sent home in a seemingly order<sup>1</sup> and lawful way. The mutilated victims of the mass-arrests were carefully hidden away, and many people were under the impression that Herr Hitler would restrict his activities to spectacular measures without any very serious consequences. After all, the National Socialists had always been noted for their love of pageantry and symbolic rituals. It is true, the boycott of the Jewish shops on April 1st was shocking and appalling, but you could hear voices saying that 'it was not a pogrom after all. Only one of these theatrical gestures the Nazis can't do without'.

Only a very few realized how great the danger was.

There was the immediate, personal danger everyone who was known to be hostile to the new regime had to take into account. As resistance would have been plain folly at the moment, thousands of Communists, Socialists and pacifists crossed the frontiers if they succeeded in evading arrest. For them, the situation was clear. They had lost a decisive battle and had to take refuge somewhere outside the battlefield, there to re-form their ranks and wait for a better opportunity. They had chosen the side on which to fight and consciously taken the risk of defeat together with the hope of victory.

But there was another group of the population in danger: the Jews. For them it had never been a question of choice. They had been appointed enemies. And even if they had wanted to take up the challenge, how could they have done it? It had been directed against a cause which did not exist: The Jewish Position of Might. There were, it is true, individual Jews who held powerful positions. But other Jews were fighting them; there was not, and never had been, any Jewish Position at all. To take up the challenge would have meant creating a party for Jewish domination in Germany, and not a single Jew would have been found for so absurd an idea.

There was another non-existent position 'the Jews' were forced to defend. Anti-Semitism was constantly stating that the Jews, as a race, were immoral and hostile to human society. Any individual can defend himself against slander, but who was there entitled to speak for the Jews? They only existed as a religious body, and as long as the anti-Semite slanderer avoided attacking them as such, it was difficult to get him into court, where the slander could be warded off. The only way to defend 'the Jews as a race' was to write books which proved that there was nothing immoral in the teachings of Jewish religion and that among the Jews there were about as many angels and crooks as in any other group of people. It would be a pathetic effort to try and convince

an enemy whose main characteristic is that he does not want to be convinced, and whose only answer will always be: 'I know you are clever and you can talk the hind-leg off a donkey.'

So it was difficult to answer the question, what would happen to the Jews. The National Socialists had made it clear in their programme that they regarded every person with even partly Jewish blood as a Jew, and that they would introduce laws against their participation in public life. But was there a personal, immediate danger to the life of every Jew so defined? There had been cases of arrested and maltreated Jews, but had they been arrested and maltreated as Jews, or only as Socialists or pacifists or other enemies of the regime?

Herr Hitler knew why he introduced his anti-Jewish laws only piecemeal, and why he did not organize a spectacular pogrom at the beginning. It was not yet quite clear what the rest of the world would say to the change in Germany, and he could wait. Refugees were to be expected after every revolution. But many hundreds of thousands of people fleeing for their lives, not because of political opinions but because of some intrinsic quality they had no power to change, would have made Europe suspicious.

Since the Reichstag fire we had been changing our lodgings frequently, and apart from a few unpleasant moments we had not come to any harm. One of the landladies tried to get out of me some extra money which was not due to her, and when I protested, fetched an S.A. man. He listened to my explanation that the woman had no earthly right to charge more than had been agreed upon, and declared at the end: 'We spit on that law of yours. I know the lady, she is a good German, and who are you, anyway?' That I did not want him to know too well. The landlady declared herself satisfied with my best wardrobe-trunk and graciously allowed us to empty it, but at the end she asked

for my guitar as well. The S.A. man watched the surrender and went away promising a speedy return for which we did not wait.

Our passports I got comparatively easily by the liberal use of Prussian military language at the police-station. The policemen, like many others, still mistook Herr Hitler's rise to power for a return of the Old Ruling Class. A man who knows how to treat a sergeant in the good old Prussian way was obviously not an Enemy of the State.

And then we were in the train. A few last hours of tension and nervousness, the change at Kehl, and the outburst of joy when we all were safe on the French side of the border. In Strasbourg a French N.C.O. came to share our compartment; the rest were all refugees. He joined in our enthusiasm and said: 'My father was in the German army during the war, and I am not very keen on war myself. But now I'm jolly glad that at least I am on this side.' He, like a good many people, was convinced that sooner or later Hitler would mean war in Europe.

We went straight to Ibiza. It was the only place I could think of, and I still had the little house there, which I had rented for five years. What we were going to live on when our money was finished, God alone knew. The others expected the Hitler regime to break down soon, but for the reasons stated I did not share their optimism. And in any case I did not intend to go back to Germany.

In my cottage I found a new lodger, a German refugee. She knew nothing about my contract, and the owner made her pay exactly ten times as much as I had to pay for the cottage. When she left after some months, her successor was charged double the amount she had been paying.

The population of the small, almost self-contained island mistook the invasion of refugees for a boom in tourists. All they noticed was that a surprising number of people had arrived lately, obviously very wealthy foreigners. As a matter of fact, none of the refugees was wealthy, but

the islanders had very good reasons for their mistake. These Germans were by no means conscious of their own circumstances. They had managed to bring a little money with them, the value of which was trebled by being changed into Spanish pesetas, and in the beginning they spent it like tourists, for the general attitude was: 'We shall get back soon.' For many months after the change in Germany, it was possible to have money sent from there. There was a limit. I think 200 Reichsmarks a month per person, but this was roughly 600 pesetas, and a working man could live not too badly on 150 pesetas. There was no refugee problem in the beginning, because the refugees existed as little as the Jews. They were nothing but a shapeless bunch of individuals who were staying outside Germany temporarily for various reasons. I had been told that it was different in France, but I have no personal experience of circumstances there.

Here the individual refugee had to put up with his particular circumstances. Some, realizing the necessity of a prolonged stay, established themselves by founding shops or cafés. The greater part went on living on money from Germany. Not all the new-comers were Jews or anti-National Socialists. There were quite a number of people with German passports among the foreigners, who had not yet made up their minds about their attitude towards Hitlerism. About many of them it was said that they were 'as good as Nazi', and one, an architect from Darmstadt, declared himself in public a member of the National Socialist Party, which did not prevent him from having friendly intercourse with the rest of the German 'refugees'. Only when a few months later two of the new-comers opened a café and refused to serve a German Jewish lady, did two camps begin to form. It had been the first sign that the two boys were not refugees themselves.

The fact that so many people were looked upon by Herr Hitler's government as Enemies of the State without having any choice of attitude, brought with it a certain disturbance

of the general conception of the term Refugee or Emigrant. How many times have I been asked, 'Are you a member of the Communist Party?' And when I said, No, but that nevertheless I did not agree with Hitlerism and had said so as clearly as possible in word and print, the answer was inevitably, 'Then why don't you change your attitude if only to be left in peace. You are not a Jew, are you?'

I can excuse people who have been robbed of the dignity of being able to choose, victims who can neither fight nor surrender. So when I was asked these questions by Jews, I could not blame them for the short-sighted attitude and for their bitter feelings towards any 'Aryan'. But I have been asked the same question a hundred times by 'neutral' foreigners. Did they not know that there is such a thing as conscience left in some people?

Partly their attitude might be explained by their insufficient knowledge of German conditions. You can't really make a merely outward peace with National Socialism. You can't, as in other countries, close your door and abstain from mixing in politics, if you have something else to do. Abolition of privacy is the main feature of modern Germany. You are forced to partake in the public life of the Third Reich, and if you are not a National Socialist, you know that you are an accessory to a particularly vile crime. And you cannot even become a martyr in Herr Hitler's country. They will show you, the beaten enemy, no chivalry. If they are convinced of the right and justice of their cause — and nobody can do more than have a conviction — let them fight for it, and if necessary, kill their enemies. I can understand that.

But it is an altogether different thing not to give the enemy fair play on principle, not to recognize that he cannot do otherwise than be convinced of the right and justice of his cause, not to leave to him the dignity of choice. To abuse as subhuman anybody who is from his conviction or by his birth regarded as an enemy. To humiliate the helpless

victim, to make him the object of inhuman jokes before he is killed. You have to go very far back in history to find this combination of brutal violence with humiliation of the victim.

Suddenly a new law made the sending of money out of Germany impossible. The consequence was disastrous for most of the refugees. They had debts, rent, an account at the greengrocer's, and were confronted with the task of explaining to the islanders that the sudden inability to pay was only due to currency laws. The apparent boom in tourists and rich new-comers burst. Actually, when the islanders had become 'tourist-conscious', more foreigners had been attracted to Ibiza. Americans, Frenchmen, Britishers took advantage of the profitable difference in money exchange. Hotels had been built, boarding houses and cafés established. The price of rents had been soaring to twenty times the amount within one year. Now a considerable part of the stream of money was drying up. It took some time for the island to recover from the shock.

At the outbreak of the disaster I was not involved myself. We lived in an old windmill, cooking our meals on the customary charcoal stove, which is about the size of a small hat-box, and the general cost of living was ridiculously low. When I failed to get any more money out of Germany, even before the new law was passed, I looked for work. It was not difficult to find a job. Wage-labour is usually scarce among villagers who make a living out of fishing and a small patch of garden, and who in addition are not inclined to work more than is absolutely necessary. A friend of mine wanted her boots mended by the local cobbler, and asked if they could be repaired while she waited. The man answered: 'I'm not working any more to-day. I've had a good meal already.'

I found work as a builder. The hours were from dawn to sunset with two hours' interval for lunch and siesta.

The houses are built without any kind of mortar; it is a trick of placing the roughly hewn stones so that they hold each other. There were two methods, the old Roman one, unaltered since the time of the Roman legions, which puts the stones diagonally in a regular pattern, and the more primitive, horizontal method. The flat roof was made of brushwood and a thick layer of clay, over thin crossbeams. I learnt the trick by building the walls which surround every garden and field, in such a way as to prevent valuable soil being carried away by the frequent gales.

At the beginning I was not accustomed to the foreign shape of the tools, but gradually I grew to like the work. It put me in the best condition I had been in for many years, and I became as sun-tanned as the Spaniards. My mates were fine fellows. They had a knack of economizing their efforts which, to a foreigner, might have looked like laziness. But the work was done at least as quickly as if they had been working like Prussians. They took me on as one of themselves without asking questions and were eager to help me with the unaccustomed craft. After sunset, I used to water two small gardens, and so my wages reached on the average 5 pesetas a day.

We had our windmill, our meals, sour red wine at a penny a pint, and cigarettes at sixteen a penny — we were happy, until I learned one day that, being a foreigner, I could no longer be employed. There was a building under construction, a score of workmen from the mainland had to be brought over. But I could not work on it or on any other job on the island.

There was a man on a visit from Palma de Mallorca, who boasted in the little bar that he had a very good position on the bigger island, which he was about to resign for something better. If I cared, I could take the job which was not good enough for him.

So I went to Mallorca to find out. There was another German refugee on board the boat, and incidentally neither



of us had our passports with us, only the *cedula*, the identification paper issued by the Spanish authorities. We were not allowed to land, but the police officers appreciated the fact that we could not very well travel round with the boat to the mainland, and we were taken into custody at the station until the question should be cleared up. After a few hours, somebody took us to the German consul. He was a friendly man, who did not yet know how to behave towards refugees, and there was no proof that we were in fact anything but 'normal' Germans. He recognized a German driving-licence as sufficient identification, and we were released. It was strange and unexpected that we were not allowed to land with our *cedulas*, but a Spanish official enlightened us later in confidence. There had been some suspicious characters about lately. Therefore the authorities were careful with German nationals.

I found out that the position I had been offered did not exist. But what was the use of going back to the hopelessness of Ibiza. Palma was a bigger place after all, something might be done here. I asked my wife to join me with the last of our money. But there was no hope of a job in Palma. There was no work for a foreigner, unless he had the money to set up his own business. There were no helpful committees to look after refugees. For a few weeks new friends helped with as much as they could afford. And then we had nothing left. I mean nothing. We went many days without a meal; there were many weeks when we were glad to have some dry bread.

'Why don't you go back to Germany?' I could have murdered the questioners, but what would happen if we did not go back? You are not allowed to starve in a foreign country. One day, the German consul would be asked to look after his nationals and to provide for their departure. After weeks of starvation we were not strong enough to think of any way out. The only hope we were able to raise was that perhaps in Barcelona it would be easier to find a

job or at least some good advice as to how to avoid being sent to Germany. One of our new friends, a German Jewess, gave us a few silver ornaments, part of what was left of her fortune, memories of a past which apparently had been beautiful. Another refugee, a Jew who later committed suicide, collected a few pesetas in cash. We took the boat to Barcelona.

The money and the sale of the ornaments helped us over a few weeks during which I tried to find some kind of post.

There was as yet no organized help for Aryan refugees, and hardly any for Jews. There was as yet hardly any conception of the Refugee. There were Germans Living Abroad, more or less friendly or hostile to Hitlerism. It was even impossible to get a clear answer as to what would happen if we could not live any longer. We came to the very end of our tether. There were only rumours. Was there any right of sanctuary for a man who had the choice — theoretically — between being a National Socialist and being an Enemy of the German State? Nobody knew for certain. Could we be deported? Perhaps, even probably.

The money dwindled away, and so did the hope of ever finding a job or a way out. When we faced nothingness once again, I managed to get some money out of Germany. It was a miracle.

But now we had to make up our mind. Should we live on the last bit of money that was ever likely to come, or should we go back? The chances were that the money would vanish as it had before, without taking us any farther. And then we would have to go into Germany, sent by the consul and welcomed at the border by the Hitler authorities. I don't know for certain whether we should actually have been deported. But in our state we could not visualize any other possibility, and nobody could give us any light or comfort on this question. 'Why don't you go back to Germany?'

There were people who did go back. And even people

who had been in Germany and had come back to Spain. They told us that if you were not on the list of a political party you were not very likely to be found out too quickly. Especially if you did not go back to your old home.

I don't think we had much of a choice. One day we were in the train on the same route we had been travelling together with the optimistic crowd of fellow-refugees. Our tickets were to Kehl, the frontier station. We arrived there without a penny, but we could always have money sent from another part of Germany. A gendarme welcomed us and ordered us to sit in a cold, empty waiting-room. We were the only passengers to alight at Kehl.

We waited for two hours. Once I tried the door and found it locked from the outside. Then the gendarme came back and asked us what we were going to do. I said that we were going to an hotel, and he recommended one. Nothing else happened. I pawned my watch for a few hours to send a telegram for money, which came immediately. We were in Germany, and for the time being, obviously safe.

Qui n'a pas une patrie, a du moins un pays.

ROUSSEAU — *Emile*

THE first thing was to get into touch with the few friends who were left in Berlin, to find out exactly how safe it was to live in the Third Reich for a man who could not afford to be looked at too closely. Several interviews had more or less the same result. As one friend clearly expressed it: 'Penitents are our latest fashion here. The Nazis like to boast of converted enemies. The reformed drunkard in a Salvationist meeting is appreciated now. All you do is wear a uniform. There is a nice range of smart uniforms to choose from. Then you are perfectly safe. Let's see which one is best for you.'

The first proposal was to join the National Socialist Automobile Corps. Here it would be easiest to get the necessary *Protektion*, which seemed to be much more important than in the corrupt times of the Republic. In this Corps a good number of aristocrats were to be found (the former Duke of Coburg was C.-in-C.) and one might easily find a friend there. To join the Black Guards was too difficult, but something might be done with the S.A.

I thought all this was going too far. If the only safety was in a uniform, it should definitely not be a brown shirt. Was there nothing slightly less political? Well, there was the organization for Air Raid Precautions: Air Force blue-and-black, jack-boots and dagger, quite smart, but not advisable. It was too well known as a *Tarnhelm* for political opponents. If a man was accused in court, and stated that he was a member of the *Luftschutzbund*, the judge was likely to treat him as a Communist right away.

But then we got the right tip: the German Air Sport Association. It had taken over, lock, stock and barrel, the old non-political Air Sport organizations anyway. I was probably on their lists.

I was. The old fellows from the Rossitten camp were already in all kinds of positions, going about in what only an expert could distinguish from a British Air Force uniform.

The cut and style of the newly invented uniforms were extraordinarily significant. A general tendency, to be seen most markedly in the S.A. and the Air Force uniform, clearly disclosed the 'English Complex' I have spoken about previously. Already during the war there had been a tendency in the army to introduce the collar and tie. Air Force aces who could afford it were wearing them with their normal tunics. It was supposed to be *englisch*. Now, the S.A. had got a uniform absolutely different from any known German style; it was almost an exact copy of a British officer's tunic. The cap was Austrian, that was all. The Air Sport and later Air Force uniform was taken as good as unaltered from the British Air Force. The Army, more conservative, and forced to wear out the old stock, followed more slowly with a Sam Browne belt and British field-service caps. The Sam Browne, in officers' slang called *Entente-Gürtel*, had already been introduced under the Republic, for after all, Herr Hitler was not the only representative of the 'hate-love' for England. It was later worn by all the National Socialist formations.

One little incident I observed was illuminating. When I returned to Berlin in 1934, the rank and file of the *Reichswehr* had adopted a new fashion of wearing their bayonets. It was against the regulations, but obviously widespread. The bayonet as a rule is worn behind and hangs down vertically, whereas the dagger of the S.A. and S.S. is suspended diagonally by a short strap at the left side of the stomach. In 1934, soldiers were shifting their bayonet to

the front and gave the supporting strap a twist to make the weapon hang diagonally like an S.A. dagger. Obviously it was fashionable in the army to look like a Nazi trooper. When, in the following year, conscription was introduced and the *Reichswehr* was replaced by a conscript army, the 'real soldier' became the fashion. The S.A. men shifted their dagger from front to back and tied it fast with an additional strap to hang like an army bayonet. The Black Guards did the same, but for them it was not enough to wear the dagger in army fashion. Their uniform was changed almost entirely, to look more like that of 'real soldiers'. If you wanted to be taken seriously, you had to look like a soldier, not like the neither-fish-nor-fowl Nazi troopers.

The officials in the offices of the Air Sport Association left no one in no doubt that they were in fact officers and that their sport was warfare. Membership was voluntary, but many things in Germany are done voluntarily because there are very good reasons for volunteering. If you are told that to do or not to do a certain thing 'gives a bad impression', you know exactly what to do. *Es macht einen schlechten Eindruck . . .* is a very powerful formula in a totalitarian state. I had to pay for my uniform, which was made of better material than any civilian can dream of in Germany, and it was correspondingly expensive. One was allowed to pay in instalments.

I managed to get a command which would keep me out of the way, the founding and leading of a *Fliegerstützpunkt* in a small town, almost a village, in Brandenburg. Not that I knew what a *Fliegerstützpunkt* was, it may be translated Air Strongpoint. The instructions were not very enlightening. But I had to recruit young men and to give them a kind of basic infantry training; so much was clear, and that is mainly what I did. Another task was to get them to build a gliding plane and so to lay the foundations of some knowledge of aircraft.

We found a little cottage a few miles away, and as the

position of commander of the *Fliegerstützpunkt* was, as a matter of course, unpaid, I once more took up my connection with Ullstein's. The standard of the German press had sunk within a year to an astonishingly low level. The people who wrote for it had to live in constant fear of writing too 'intellectually'. Only a very few had the means and the boldness not to care. The new National Socialist slang had spread newly coined phrases mixed up with badly new-constructed words, invented in the circles of the S.A. There were a few editors left in the *Ullsteinhaus* who refused to tolerate the decay of the German language in their columns, but theirs was obviously a losing battle.

What the papers said in bad German was not worth reading. The editors got their instructions from the Ministry of Propaganda, and sometimes they had scarcely space to print anything but the ready-made articles which came from that source. I once saw the letter from the ministry reprimanding an editor for the use of the expression 'former German colonies'. 'Former' was forbidden. In an anti-Soviet article there had been a picture of General Blücher, and again the editor got a solemn reprimand. It was undesirable to show the popular Russian leader. I started one of my own articles: 'It is a common saying in Germany that the French don't travel abroad much because they have all kinds of landscapes within their own frontiers.' In print it read: 'It is a common saying in Germany that the Greeks . . .' which did not make sense at all. But, the editor explained, it was by order undesirable to mention the French. I was longing for the good old times of *Pic Henin*.

I could never get rid of the feeling that I was reading the press of some queer sect or reform-club when I opened a German paper. It was the same tone with but slightly different terminology. The outer world was sinful and evil, and you had better take no notice of it. The whole Reich had mentally become a *Siedlung*, and not only mentally. Whatever the official explanations are for maintaining the

self-contained economy, I believe that, as always in Germany, the reason given just follows the emotional impulse. Herr Hitler, the same type as the reform-fanatics at the head of the *Siedlungen*, could not help organizing Germany as a self-contained monastery where he could realize his dreams without being disturbed by intercourse with the profane outer world.

All the publishers were complaining that it was impossible to get a good novel in a contemporary setting. After a few conversations I found out what the ultimate reason was. The National Socialist State had abolished problems as such. There can be no problem in a state where everything is decided beforehand. It is the well-known danger of being in possession — or imagined possession — of The Whole Absolute Truth. And another difficulty was that if a man who could write a tolerable German style wrote a novel in which the hero did not become a member of some National Socialist formation or other, the official Party press howled that it was not a contemporary German novel. If the hero joined the S.A., the same press was crying out: 'Who is the author? Where has he been during the period of the struggle for power — the *Kampfzeit*?' If the style was good, the author had usually been connected with a Democratic publisher's firm, and his new publisher did not care too much for this unearthing of the past.

I must admit that I never cared much for the wireless. But I learned to appreciate it in Germany under the Hitler regime. That is to say, during our stay in the cottage. Far away from Berlin and its systematic attempts to disturb foreign broadcasts, it was the only window in the Chinese wall around the German *Siedlung*. And certain events inside Germany were given a dramatic colouring when heard over the radio instead of being read about in the papers.

I well remember the peaceful Saturday afternoon in the country when I listened to a variety programme from



Copenhagen. The light music was really a pleasure after so many German military marches, and the voices of some girls singing had such a pleasantly trifling note. And then a voice from Berlin came through '... find myself forced to dismiss Chief of Staff Röhm ...' I switched over to the *Deutschlandsender*. It was the 30th of June.

The general shopkeeper from the village nearby came down to ask what I intended to do. He had some position or other in the Motorized S.A., and two contradictory commands had reached him: one to stand by at home, the other to mount his motor-bike and to go somewhere to join a certain unit in town. He was in doubt which way would lead him to the firing squad. I did not know myself, and there were luckily no commands for Air Sport men at the moment. So I left the *Stützpunkt* to my second-in-command, and went to Berlin to find out exactly what was happening. It was all over when I arrived, and though the papers carried nothing about such unimportant details, I learned from friends about the murder of the whole household of General Schleicher as well as about all the other happenings. A few weeks later I happened to sit next to an S.S. man in mufti in a Berlin *Weinstube*. I know he was an S.S. man because later he showed his identification card. The boy was drinking heavily and mumbling unintelligible words into his glass. His girl friend was trying to keep him quiet, but suddenly he broke out in a kind of complete nervous breakdown. He was not drunk, only he had been trying to stifle something in his mind, and now it all came out. He had been one of a firing squad during the days round the 30th of June. There were other things haunting him as well. But the confession was poured out so rapidly that I could not follow all he said. He only repeated over and over: 'I should not have done it, but I was on duty. I should not tell you, don't give me away. But I must tell ...' The girl was in desperate fear of his being overheard. She came to my table and implored me to forget what I could not help hearing. The man followed, and

continued his confession, accusing himself of murder. He produced his card and a cigarette box with an engraved dedication from the former Chief of the Berlin S.A., Ernst, who had been shot on the 30th. Luckily the *Weinstube* was almost empty, and the few drinkers at other tables did not pay much attention.

It was also over the radio that I heard of the murder of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss. The version broadcast by the German stations did not throw much light on the happenings in Vienna. But I was able to pick up almost every European country that night. A Hungarian friend who was staying as our guest was able to understand the languages we did not know, and we composed a pretty clear picture. When the news of the Italian mobilization came through from, I think, Milan, we expected war. After all, to imagine that somewhere the head of a state is murdered with the cry 'Heil the Head of the Neighbouring Country!' without a war being the natural consequence, was hard to believe. The murderers of Serajevo had, after all, not been members of an official Serbian organization, so in the case of the Dollfuss murder, the question of responsibility was much clearer.

When the death of Marshal Hindenburg was broadcast, I listened from the cottage to Herr Göbbels's careful wording of the news. But the funeral service I heard in a Berlin café. I had not expected the broadcast, but the owner switched his set on and all the customers had to drop their papers and listen. In a way I thought this was one of the most shocking performances of National Socialist ideology. The old man had been a good Christian, whatever else he might have been. He certainly had believed in the Gospel of Christ and Eternal Bliss after the old fashion. And now Herr Hitler concluded his funeral speech: 'Dead war-lord — enter Valhalla!' Even if it was only a metaphor, it was in very bad taste. But I doubt whether it was meant to be only a metaphor. There had been an army chaplain present, the newly appointed Reich Bishop by the grace of Herr Hitler. But he did not

read the Christian funeral service. A sermon, or rather a speech, the Lord's Prayer — but not the formulas without which a funeral is not a Christian one. Instead of that, the old man's soul was invited to enter the pagan paradise, Valhalla.

After some months I was transferred to Berlin, to join another unit of the Air Sport Association, which normally would have been called the Anti-Aircraft Branch of the Auxiliary Air Force. A rather ridiculous fuss was made about the secrecy of the units — fancy titles instead of the normal ranks, differently headed writing paper for internal and external use, and the Hitler salute outside camps and barracks. Inside it was the military salute, and, very significantly, the men were grumbling that they were not allowed to salute in the military way in the streets. The outstretched arm looked too much like S.A. or other frivolous formations, they said. It was bad enough that the uniform was, even if only slightly, different from that of the real Air Force. An expert might have noticed it. But what strikes me is how they expected the force to be kept a secret, if they made us wear a bursting bomb embroidered on our sleeve. The bursting bomb had always been the badge of the Artillery in Germany, and what kind of sport was a man supposed to be engaged in if he was wearing this sign? Nevertheless, we were constantly exhorted to keep in mind that we were soldiers (the German word covers airmen as well) and would be tried for high treason if we breathed a word about the existence of the units.

I don't think that much damage is done to the Third Reich by unveiling the horrible secret now. Anybody who cared to find out, let alone a trained observer, would not have had the slightest trouble in doing so. All he had to do was to walk across a Berlin street.

The spirit of the troops was excellent. In many ways it was better than in the old army, because everybody, officers

as well as the rank and file, was interested in his job. The interest was purely military; politics were not much appreciated, though certain lectures on National Socialism were part of the routine. The organization was somehow on lines similar to that of the Territorials, full-time positions were only held by a skeleton staff. An old suspicion of mine was confirmed, that the Germans had only been wearing the fancy uniforms of Herr Hitler's formations for lack of the real thing. If they could get real soldiering combined with the beloved uniform, they preferred it.

Rumours about the outbreak of a war in the near future were frequent. They were welcomed with undivided enthusiasm, whether the talk was about going against the Czechs, the Poles, the French, or against Britain to get the 'stolen Colonies'. If it was only a war. The men were by no means all young fellows; we had all ages between 20 and 40.

In Berlin I had fuller experience of totalitarian everyday life. It is difficult to give a real description of what it is like to anybody who has not been leading it in Germany and as a German. What you are told about such a life outside is bound to miss the point. And you can't experience it as a foreigner in Germany. Even if you speak the language like a native, that will only help you to get into people's confidence to the small extent to which modern Germans confide in each other. But it can't give you the mental attitude of a German, and that is essential if one is to have the sense of what life there is actually like.

What you hear about Germany to-day is propaganda, whether it is pro- or anti- Hitler. And propaganda is bound to get blunt in time. It is true that the Hitler regime has introduced some measures which have to be acknowledged as improvements. Although the way it disposed of unemployment is not a measure which invites imitation, to give the working man the opportunity to go on a holiday to Norway or Madeira at a cost which he really can afford is such a measure.

The concentration camps are a disgrace to humanity, and so are the legal system and the execution of 'normal' criminal punishment. But you have been told about these things again and again. And you will never be able to imagine what horrors there are behind the word 'concentration camp', what human misery has been created by some of the German laws. I have not seen any concentration camp myself. But I know the psychology of those who run them, and their ideological education by Hitlerism. I know how they behave, given power over helpless people who are looked at as sub-human. I could imagine. But I will not try. Not really. For a man who hates cannot think. So I will not write about those things, only about small happenings, about everyday life.

Do you care for privacy? There is none in a totalitarian state. How would you like this to happen to you? —

A man in a brown uniform calls at your home. You know him, he is the caretaker from next door. But to-day he has donned a brown shirt and tunic and personifies the Party. He is the Warden of your Block. You can't refuse to let him in. He has a right to intrude and to ask questions. 'Well, Mrs. So-and-so, are you not in the family way? Why not? Don't you know what the *Führer* says? . . .' Your young wife may blush, you can't slap the fellow's face. 'How much are you earning now, Mr. So-and-so? I see. And how much did you give to the Winter Relief? I see. A man who lives in such a nice flat, with a big radio set. Do you hear foreign stations? How much did you give for Air Raid Precautions? That all? Well, not everybody has yet really understood the meaning of National Socialism.'

'It makes a very bad impression, if you run such an expensive flat and give so little. Couldn't you move and give more? Are you in any organization? Your wife? No? That makes a very bad impression. But you are a subscriber of the *Stürmer*? You are not? Don't you know that the Jews are our misfortune? . . .' And so on, endless questions. Indiscreet questions. And at the end: the bad impression. *Es macht einen*

*schlechten Eindruck.* There is a special decree of Herr Hitler's: nobody is allowed to force anybody to subscribe to the Party press. But it makes a bad impression if you don't read the *Völkischer Beobachter*. No law threatens you with punishment if you don't do what you are asked. But that only means that anything might happen to you if you don't. It is easier to break the law than to break the friendly invitation to volunteer. So maintain good relations with your Block Warden. He is usually a caretaker, so he knows all the gossip. And it is his duty to know all about you.

At the beginning, we shared a floor in a house with several other parties. The floor was divided into one-and two-room flats. One day a bank bought the building and the representative of the new owner cancelled all our contracts. It was doubtful whether he could find a legal justification for his action, and the other parties asked me to go to the office which had to deal with such cases. It was not a court, just a State office run by Party officials, to reconcile disagreements between house-owners and tenants.

An official with the badge of the Party saw me. He was friendly and tried to be helpful. But he said:

'Don't you see what your situation is? The bank has the money, and what are you? You work for a living. It's class-warfare, that's what it is. The bank knows how to keep just within the law, and we can't do anything. We are not allowed to. Luckily we have some favourable cases sometimes when the owner is a Jew. The Jews don't know what exactly we can do to them. Actually, in this rent business we can't do a thing even to them. But we have only to shout and to talk about the Camp and the abolition of class-warfare—and they do all we want. Can't you prove there is a Jew in that bank? You can't? What a pity. How shall we show people that we have a *Volksgemeinschaft*?'

Here is an election, or what is called an election, in Herr

Hitler's Germany. You may elect the deputies to the Reichstag presented by the Party. There are no others. The alternative is to say yes or no. Or a new spectacular law is going to be introduced. The people have to decide. You can say yes or no.

You know perfectly well that whatever you say, the Party's deputies will march into the Reichstag in uniform and shout their 'Heil!' and their 'Yes!' in unison. All you can perhaps do is to make the rulers feel uneasy if there are many 'no'-votes. But maybe they will make you feel uneasy first. There is no law against saying 'no', no written law. But Herr Hitler's judges don't need a written law; that is one of the basic rules of the new justice. If they find out that, you are an enemy of the State. But can they find out?

Before an election there is much talk about illegal, corrupt methods of finding out exactly who said 'no'. Cleverly constructed urns and what not. Obviously malevolent inventions. But very seldom is one of the hostile gossipers arrested. An atmosphere of uncertainty is good for the business on hand. It does not do any damage to have as many as possible 'genuine' yes-votes, even if they are not essential. 98 $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent will be a figure which looks solemnly correct and makes a very good impression abroad.

By and by you not only get used to this kind of 'election' but there comes a temptation to which many humans are bound to yield. There comes another great success in foreign politics for Herr Hitler, and you feel you have your share in it. Did you not say 'yes'? It is your success. Next time, another really and truly genuine 'yes'-voter goes to the urn.

One afternoon I had tea with a friend in Berlin, who was a foreigner and a writer of excellent short stories. It had been a hot and sultry summer day and we kept the windows wide open. As everybody else did the same we could not help witnessing a scene in the flat across the street, where a pair of lovers were holding hands in an old-fashioned drawing-room.

'Look at them', said my friend, 'tender feelings and romance have not yet vanished from the war-camp. You notice, the man is wearing civilian clothes and they both behave like normal, decent lovers. You personally should properly not look at them, it's indiscreet. But I have a good excuse, being a novelist. I have to observe the behaviour of people to get the touch of reality into my work.'

The young man opposite prepared to take leave of his love. A last embrace, a kiss, and then they both stepped back from each other as if lightning had struck the floor between their feet. They stiffened, kicked their heels and threw their arms up in the 'German salute'.

'You see', said my friend, 'it has paid me to be indiscreet. I always wanted to know whether this is done in private life as well or whether it is confined to official occasions.'

For weeks I observed an old man in the little *Weinstube* where I was a regular customer. He was always neatly dressed in black, constantly struggling with his pince-nez, and generally the very image of the friendly German Philistine. He seemed to be very fond of his small black dachshund, which was allowed to sit on a chair at the side of its master. The old man, petting the animal, which was probably the only friend he had, looked exactly like one of the sentimental pictures of the end of the last century.

One day I met him, as you meet strangers in a *Weinstube*. He was a judge, president of a panel of the highest court in Berlin. As I was wearing uniform, he spoke freely about his duties. 'It is a pleasure, nowadays. You need not bother any longer about these confounded limits of sentence when you send a fellow to prison. Only sometimes I have my little difficulties with the People's Court. They try to snatch away every good case. And sometimes I can't understand their sentences. Only yesterday they gave a man a life-sentence. He had been trying to smuggle Communist pamphlets across the frontier. Would you believe it, a life-sentence!



I phoned to the president, and said: My dear fellow, you are bringing the prices down! I always have them executed. What are we given the new laws for if we don't use them?"

After a few glasses of wine he unbosomed himself, and confided that he was trying to get another panel. '*Erbgesundheits Fälle*, you know, very interesting. I have listened to some cases. The public was, of course, excluded.' He giggled. 'It was a pleasure. What a pleasure. You should have seen the girl when they pronounced the sentence: Castration. Well, we have to shield the purity and strength of our German race.'

He petted the dachshund. 'Another bit of sausage, Lotte — darling? You are a decent girl, aren't you? You won't commit race-treason.'

I learned to develop into a human crustacean. It was the only way to put up with many things, to close my eyes tightly and to perform mechanically the part of the German citizen and soldier. The military part of the performance was almost a recreation. Soldiering, apart from ceremonial duties, is an interesting craft and has its own law. Tactical problems, I admit, have always fascinated me, and they are the same whether the army is brown, red or white. The idea that I would possibly have to go to war for Herr Hitler's country was unpleasant. But I knew that I would be outside Germany before a war broke out. I took up every bit of information about conditions outside, but not much came through the Chinese wall, and it was almost impossible to make plans.

I closed my eyes and hoped for a time when I would be able to get rid of the crust, to think whatever I liked, to look at the world freely. But there was a thing I never managed to put up with, nor to close my eyes to.

You don't see people tortured, you don't see the instruments of German justice, the concentration camp and the

operation theatre. Even the small, red posters announcing still another execution are only to be seen for a few hours. Then they are covered with an advertisement of a band concert or a brand of cigarettes. If for the sake of your mental health you have to keep all these things away from yourself, you can succeed. But there was one thing I could not help seeing every day, and every day it made me sick though I did not look at it. The *Stürmerkasten* at the corner.

You find them in every quarter of the cities, in every town and village, huge, flat boxes on two pillars, painted in bright red and adorned with the eagle carrying the swastika. Behind glass they show every page of the latest copy of the *Stürmer*, the paper of Herr Hitler's friend Streicher.

A *Stürmerkasten* is unveiled with the ceremonies due to a State memorial, high state and party officials participating in the solemn act. It is not an advertisement for a private paper, it serves the enlightenment of the people in the name of the German government. Almost on every page you find the *Führer* quoted, as a proof that he agrees with every word printed here. There are always readers to be found in front of a *Stürmerkasten*. It is a patriotic duty to make use of the facilities given by the government, so children are told at school. All the schools are subscribers, sometimes you see in the *Stürmer's* pages a lovely picture: the children of a class reading the latest copy. They are encouraged at school to read it, and you can find them reading it at the *Stürmerkasten* round the corner from where you live.

The *Stürmer* is an anti-Semitic paper, you know that. You will probably find it bad enough that children are poisoned with race-hatred. But what do you do if you find your little boy or daughter reading pornography?

This paper, recommended by the government in every German school, displayed at every important street-corner, is the filthiest, lowest kind of pornography you can possibly find. Under the cover of anti-Semitism it serves as a display

of the basest sort of sexual perversion. For reasons which belong to scientific papers and not to a book meant to be read by the general public, anti-Semitism has always been combined with Sadism and Exhibitionism. The *Stürmer* has only inherited a long tradition from other papers. Only these were read behind closed doors, by a sort of people whose proper place in the public interest is behind bars. What do you do, if you find your little girl reading such a paper? In Germany you have to pat her shoulders and praise her for patriotism. If you don't — well, *es macht einen schlechten Eindruck*, an especially bad impression in this case.

I don't think that all the books in defence of Jewry can do much good. I know a few which are excellent, and they should convince any anti-Semite — if anti-Semites ever could be convinced, which by definition is impossible. The strength and danger of anti-Semitism is not to be found in its arguments but in what comes where the argument ends.

You may say: I don't like Jews. That is entirely your business. Nobody will force you to have Jewish friends or to marry a Jewish girl. But the anti-Semite is not content with that liberty, he wants to destroy Jewry. And if you ask him why, he will at the end of the conversation say, that if the reason is not in your blood, you are as sub-human as the Jews themselves. I am looking forward to the filth they will certainly throw at me and at my private life for what I am going to say. That will be another proof of the purity of their intentions.

I am not going to argue against the anti-Semites. You can't argue where you are forbidden to make use of reason and logic. But you should know a few things about the part anti-Semitism is to play in European civilization if we let it.

The question whether anti-Semitism should be allowed to penetrate into our public life and into the laws ruling our

states is not a question of liking Jews or not, nor of being better or worse than other people, nor of the number of Jews in any trade, profession, class or party. We will cut out for the moment the question whether we should or should not have pity for human beings who are badly treated and help them. (I think we should, but don't let's say about it now.)

The question which we should ask ourselves, if we care for the future of our European civilization (and if you care, you are out of the conversation, though you have perfect right to your private opinion) — the question is

Shall we, can we, put up with the introduction of an entirely new principle into the basis of our moral and legal system?

I know that the reducing of nice, palpable facts to abstract roots is unpopular, and I don't expect too many people to listen, let alone to draw conclusions. But for certain reasons the basis of what we are accustomed to call European civilization happens to be reason and logic. We can decide to have another basis from now on, but if we do we should do so consciously. The National Socialist spokesman declared: 'Germany has resigned from Western Civilization was nothing if not consistent. Everybody is at liberty to do so, then we shall get the two fighting-lines distinct.

The new principle introduced into the moral and legal code of Germany is that a man can be judged by a fact which is not within his choice. To introduce the term Race into the system of Right and Wrong, however, means to destroy that system utterly. A law directed against a person who has not been given the choice between fulfilling and breaking a law is no law.

Here the Racist will raise an objection. He will do so only here, but as this time it seems to be a logical objection we will answer. The Racist will say: To be a dangerous lunatic or a case of criminal insanity is not within the choice of a person either. But must we not have a law against

such people, to protect the rest of the population against them?

Right you are, sir. We must indeed have such a law. We must protect society from people who can't help being dangerous. So, if a Jew develops homicidal mania (they surprisingly seldom do, by the way) put him into a lunatic asylum by all means. But can you prove that every man and woman of what your law calls the Jewish Race is criminally insane? You can? — No, you can't. The trouble is only that I can't afford the time to contradict the evidence you offer in all your books and papers. And if I could, as others have done, you would finally retire behind your Blood and other mystical screens.

But let us, only for argument's sake, suppose that you are able to prove your case against the Jews. Suppose they all are insane, criminal, in short as dangerous as the people we agreed to put into asylums. Do you know that here we are again at the crossroads between civilization and barbarism?

If the Jews are poor people, who can't help being dangerous, we must have pity for them and treat them as we treat our insane brothers in the asylums, where I hope they are treated well.

(I beg the pardon of every normal person for these pre-somptions, but I am arguing for once with an anti-Semite.)

I know you won't agree. No pity for the weak, the poor. It is merely consistent again when your periodicals advocate the destroying of mental cases, and when your law sterilizes them as long as it has not yet made up its mind to kill them. You say, you would rather help and further the strong, straight, sane, beautiful? How wonderful that sounds. But I don't believe in that Blond Beast of yours, the beauty without mercy.

And was not Hölderlin insane? I know you can do without his eternal song. But what about Nietzsche? You quote him quite a lot. I know he would have escaped the knife as long

as he wrote the teachings you have unrightfully adopted. But would he have escaped your concentration camps after all he wrote about the Jews and after all the bitter truth he said about your cherished German race? Your *Führer* likes to be photographed together with the philosopher's sister, guardian of the bequest of the man who said that she was the last person on earth to understand him.

No. I see I can't argue with anti-Semites. I don't understand all this. Probably because it is not in my blood.

## CHAPTER XXI

The characteristic of the hour is that the commonplace mind, knowing itself to be commonplace, has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace, and to impose them wherever it will.

J. ORTEGA Y GASSET — *The Revolt of the Masses*

LIVING in Germany became a strain of a kind I had never before experienced. I had known some pretty bad times, the breakdown of everything that had seemed stable, danger and starvation. But this was worse, and I only slowly realized what made it worse. Turmoil, danger and starvation were outside oneself, things one could fight against. This new, hostile power had one quality which made it more terrible than anything else. One could not help being a part of it. By the realization of Herr Hitler's dream in the Third Reich, the Jews had been forced into the role of the Dangerous Enemy and declared sub-human. The same stroke of the pen had made every German of the Blood a victor and super-human Aryan. Whatever I did, I could not help participating in the spoil and sharing the responsibility. As an accessory to the crime, I could not fight against it. I might have been able to fight outwardly against the Hitler regime, which in my position would have amounted to an especially unpleasant and complicated kind of suicide. But I was not certain whether I had any right to do it. I knew there were people engaged in the dangerous task of keeping the Left traditions alive, of organizing resistance. Men and women who knew that the friendly Philistine with the dachshund would find great pleasure in taking their lives for distributing a handbill, and who kept on with their heroic struggle.

You find a letter among your mail in the morning,

a neutral, typewritten envelope. Inside you find a pamphlet, telling the truth that nobody in Germany is to know. There is a law commanding you to hand it over immediately at the nearest police station. By fulfilling the law, you might help the police to trace the sender. You will have an unpleasant time at the station, for they will ask you for an explanation of why you of all people have been singled out as a recipient of such a letter. Is there anything in your past to justify the charge that you are in sympathy with the enemies of the State? If you don't bring the leaflet to the police, you might have a visitor from the station who knows for certain that to-day you had a certain letter. Why did you not bring it to the police? Every method is right in Herr Hitler's fight to destroy his opponents.

I deeply admire these heroes of a strong belief. And I know they will not accept my admiration because I am not on their side in the fight. It was not only because it would have been plain suicide in my case. While living in Germany, I began to doubt whether I had the right to make any attempt to take away from the Germans a thing they seemed to love more than anything they ever had before.

The Germans have lovable qualities, their capacity for ardent enthusiasm, their sense of order, their thoroughness; even their ability to throw away reason and to follow a mysterious voice; all have their greatness. All these qualities seem to develop at their best when they are displayed under the sign of dynamic violence. But then they are not so lovable, except to the Germans themselves.

They obviously were enjoying Hitlerism immensely, and who was I to tell them that they should not?

The collections for some charity or other or for the benefit of the numerous Party organizations, held almost every Sunday, were perhaps looked at as a nuisance by the majority though nobody dared to say so. But you should have seen the crowds in the days when all the prominent leaders of Party and State were collecting for Winter Relief. I dared to go



I told him that I was sorry that I had no right to fly the Union Jack, but that I thought there was a difference.

'The flags of all countries are nothing but cherished symbols of the respective nations. In peace-time they are not directed *against* anybody, so they can't offend anybody. Your country flies the swastika, the symbol of hatred and merciless fight against a certain part of the population in every country. It is not just a national ensign. It is a sign hostile to the very principles of democratic freedom. I have heard your fellows, Berlin University students, shouting in chorus: We shit on freedom! How can you ask democratic freedom for the symbol of the abolition of that freedom? It was a clever trick of your *Führer's* to get the legal protection due to a national flag for a symbol no decent people would otherwise tolerate.'

He answered uneasily: 'But we have to carry a mission to the world for the benefit of the world itself. Democracy is all rotten.'

I think he was sincere, but I could not help smiling. 'Better have a look at the rotten democracy first. You see, missionaries should know something about the habits of the people they are going to convert. Have you ever seen anything outside your Third Reich?'

He had not, and I advised him first of all to dress like a normal European in the sinful world outside his *Siedlung*. Perhaps I should not have given him that advice. The boy did not give any answer. He stared at his hobnailed boots. After a few minutes of silence, he took his rucksack and left the compartment. The ladies laughed: 'You have scared him away.'

But after another few minutes, the boy came back. He had changed into normal dress, and one of the ladies said, inaudibly to him: 'Don't you think he has come to look rather a dear?'

It was exactly what I was thinking.

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